£1000 FOR PICTURE PUZZLES. See page 170.

The June

ROYAL

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"Who can Joke on as Happy a Shore?" PAGE 18

LINCOLNSHIRE COAST FOR HOLIDAYS

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

WAITING FOR YOU
BY TAKING

BEECHAM'S PILLS

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There's mother calling from the beach,
And nurse is standing by.
They want to put my sandals on,
And make me clean and dry.
And then, my friends, I'm going to see
That everybody hustles,
To try and win the thousand pounds
For solving Picture Puzzles.

(The rhyme is bad but the hint is good. Turn to page 170 and follow it. Ed. R.M.)

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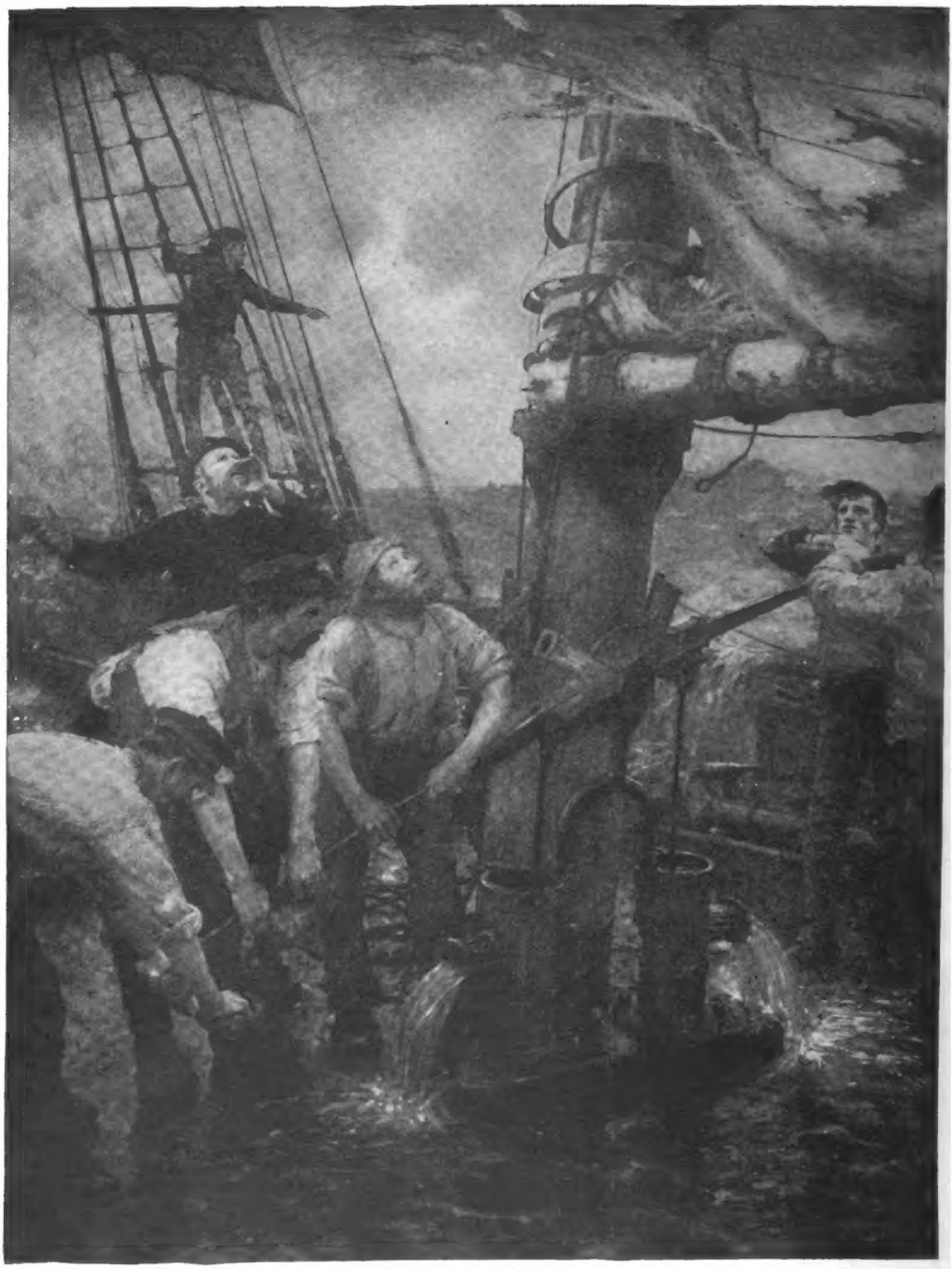

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"ALL HANDS TO THE PUMPS."

From the Painting by H. S. Tuke, A.R.A.

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NIGHTIES *v* PYJAMAS

Which appeal to you the most—nighties or pyjamas? Perhaps these pictures of charming actresses in their chosen night attire will help you to a decision.

MISS UNITY MORE.

After many successes at the Empire, in Leicester Square, Unity More has moved to the famous theatre a few doors away—Daly's. She is George Edwardes' latest star, and under his management is proving that she can sing and act as well as she dances—and her dancing is delightful.

Pretty Miss Unity loves pyjamas, and wears them in private life. She says they are so jolly and "comfy"—and such a joy if burglars turn up unexpectedly!

Photo *Elwin Neame.*

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MISS MURIEL MARTIN-HARVEY.

Muriel Martin-Harvey is an enthusiastic pyjama girl. "I adore pyjamas," she declares, "they're so free and easy, and attractive. I always wear them, and I've been to Fancy Dress Balls as a Pyjama Girl. Skirts are bad enough in the daytime—it's such a joy to get rid of them at night."

She certainly looks very fascinating in her pyjamas, so her choice is justified.

Photo Claude Harris.

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MISS MOLLY TERRAINE.

Here is a clever young actress who adds another name to the list of Old Bensonians who have won fame behind the footlights. Molly Terraine began her stage career in Mr. F. R. Benson's company, playing "boys'" parts with great success. Then she went straight to Mr. Fred Terry's management, making a hit as the ingénue in "The Popinjay."

After three years with Mr. Terry, Miss Terraine joined the Haymarket company, in "Within the Law." She likes "nighties" and fluffy lace caps much better than pyjamas.

Photo *Claude Harris.*

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MISS LAURA COWIE.

Though Laura Cowie has worn pyjamas on the stage, she doesn't always indulge in them for private use, though she likes them very much. "I wore my first suit of pyjamas in 'The Seven Sisters,' at the Savoy," she confesses, "and loved them—in fact, I played a whole act in yellow silk pyjamas."

Now she has been playing at the Savoy again, but not in pyjamas, for she appeared as Hermia, in Mr. Granville Barker's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Photo *Claude Harris*

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MISS KITTY RICIMER.

This beautiful actress, who has played leading parts in "Old Heidelberg," musical comedies, and Lyceum melodramas, is a staunch upholder of nighties in preference to pyjamas. Perhaps she knows how fascinating long golden hair looks over a flowing robe de nuit?

The other day Miss Ricimer had a nasty smash up in a taxi-cab, but, luckily, though some stitches had to be put in her nose, the effects will not be lasting.

Photo *Claude Harris.*

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MISS MARGERY RUSSELL.

The little lady who smiles at you above is a rapidly rising star in theatreland. After spending several terms at the Academy of Dramatic Art, Miss Russell made her début in some French plays at the New Theatre. Then she went in for Tango dancing, and afterwards played a part in the "Joy Ride Lady."

Look out for her in a new revue in the autumn. She thinks a nightie is infinitely preferable to pyjamas, because it's so soft and feminine.

Photo *Claude Harris*

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MISS VIOLET GRAHAM.

From farce, Miss Graham migrated to musical comedy, and after playing at the Shaftesbury and the Lyric, appeared as the heroine of that thrilling Lyceum melodrama "You Made Me Love You."

Miss Graham—do you notice her likeness to Miss Lily Elsie by the way?—put on pyjamas for the first time in her life for the above photograph, because she was so curious to see if she liked them. And she was so delighted that she declares she will always wear them in future.

Photo *Claude Harris.*

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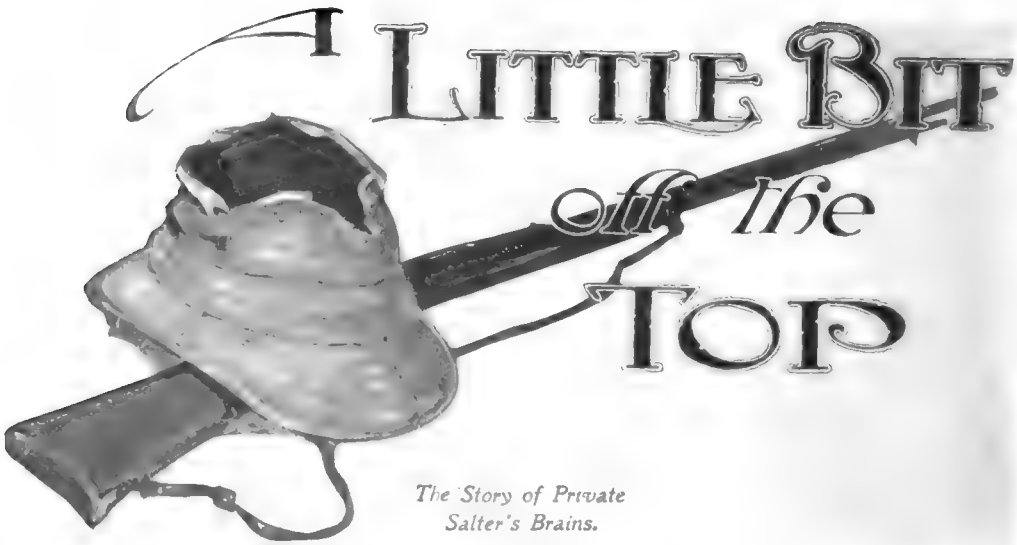

The Story of Private Salter's Brains.

By E. A. Morphy.

I.

Private Nathaniel Salter was praying with a devoutness regrettably uncommon in men of his rank and calling.

There could be no question as to the sincerity of his orisons, but his piety suggested not so much the enthusiasm of the saint with a labour of love to perform, as the eager frenzy of the tardy penitent who finds himself with a heavy conscience to unload and scant time wherein to compass the unloading.

The latter was Salter's true predicament.

Spick! Spack! Piff! Paff!

At irregular but infinitesimal intervals, and on every side of the preoccupied soldier, bullets, nails, bits of wire and missiles of all the other varied brands affected by tribesmen on the Border, whined through the heated atmosphere and tossed up irritating little spurts of dust.

A three-inch length of telegraph wire—shot slug-fashion from some zealous Afridi's *jezail*—had torn the dome from Salter's helmet. Simultaneously, it had ripped a piece off the top of Salter's head. The blood that trickled freely through his bristly hair, and into his ears, told Salter that much.

Hence his frantic state of mind.

Foremost among the obsessions that worried him was a vivid belief in eternal punishments of a peculiarly poisonous kind.

Though he could not look at the top of his head, and dared not lift his fingers to the wound lest the touch of them should make him shriek with agony, Salter was as fully convinced as a man may be of anything on this side of the grave, that his brains had been denuded of their upper covering, and were cooking in the brazen sunshine of the Tirah!

Consequently his mind was racing against death for the guerdon of his salvation, and the outlook was disquieting in the extreme.

Spick! Spack! Piff! Paff!

Incessantly and all about him spat up those vicious little whiffs of bullet-driven dust.

Meanwhile the ambushed picket, whereof Salter had formed an unimportant unit ere Fate smote him on the poll, was rapidly resolving itself into a shambles.

As soon as the luckless party could reform itself after the first shock of unforeseen attack, the officer in command had rushed his men to a little hollow in the rocks, less than a hundred paces further on, which promised shelter a trifle better than the rough but open roadway of the defile through which they had been marching.

There, at the cost of half-a-dozen fresh casualties, they had run up a breastwork of

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rocks so as to form the hollow into what is known as a sangar.

It was not until this breastwork was high enough to afford protection to the wounded, that Captain Cruikshank stood up so as fully to survey his position and his losses.

There were seven dead men below in the Pass where they had been surprised. The survivors had had all they could do to fetch along their wounded. Cruikshank himself had snatched up the bugler who had dropped at his side, and carried him over his shoulder while they ran the gauntlet. As he now glanced across the breastwork, and looked down the Pass to see if the Afridis were coming up to seek and mutilate the dead, his astonished gaze fell upon the figure of Private Salter who was kneeling fairly in the centre of the rough pathway, his clasped hands extended dramatically towards Heaven, his parched lips gabbling in prayer.

"We can't leave that man out there, Nolan!" said he to the hard-bitten sergeant at his side. "They'll chop him into living mincemeat if we do!"

The sergeant snapped together his heavy jaws.

"No, sir," said he. "We won't leave him there!"

A minute later—inspired by no sense of mercy, but consumed by a wrath so fierce that it paralysed his normally incomparable powers of blasphemy—Nolan leapt over the sangar wall and raced through the storm of lead in quest of Private Salter.

Mute as an oyster, but agile as a monkey, the sergeant flung himself upon the praying soldier, and grabbed him by the back of the neck.

Unlike the majority of Cockneys, Salter was a giant of towering bulk, but Nolan, though standing scarcely five feet eight in his socks, yanked up the private from his knees to his feet, and shook him as a terrier would shake a rabbit. Not a word did he utter.

Salter balanced himself automatically, like a somnambulist, and continued to gabble out strings of incomprehensible prayers, while the sergeant stepped back a few paces and picked up the man's abandoned rifle.

Bereft of language, Nolan could only act. Opening a fist that was as hard as a griddle, he clouted Salter in the jaw. Then, as the wretched man reeled round under the blow, he caught him with the toe of his heavy boot fair in the seat of his trousers.

Salter spun forward like a drunken shuttlecock, arms out, grasping the air blindly, in the effort to avert a fall.

"Halt!" yelled the recovered voice of Nolan.

The red horror of his wound, the blighting imminence of the Pit, the cackle of the Lee-Metfords, and the rattle of the Martinis and *jezails* all vanished instantly out of Salter's scheme of things. The kick and the blow, instead of scattering his unprotected brains, restored the inexorable sway of discipline. He stopped like a stricken hare.

"Come back for your rifle!"

Nolan lurched angrily as he spat out the command. Then, circumspectly as Agag, he tottered two steps forward, laid down Salter's rifle, and seated himself gently in the spot whence Salter had just been ejected.

Salter came back.

"You'll be after excusing me for taking a chair, won't you, Miss Salter?" sniggered the sergeant with scathing politeness. "And you'll be after picking up your own jewel-handled parasol—you swine!" he added in a voice of deepening harshness.

"And you'll say, 'Thank you so kindly, sawgeant!'" he continued as a happy after-thought, and with a mincing accent that mingled ill with his hoarseness and his Limerick brogue.

Salter gazed back into the mocking eyes that held him mesmerised, and stooped—still gazing into them—for his rifle.

"You'll be afther saying it now!" rasped Nolan venomously, "bowing to me gracious-like, and smiling on me calm, and genteel, and collected, as if you was the Duchess of Whitechapel dining at Buckingham Palace, and passing your plate to the Widow for a second helping of tripe!"

Piff! Paff! Spick! Spack!

The medley of assorted missiles pinged down more fiercely than ever from the smoke-wreathed rocks and ridges, but they failed to impress Salter so terribly as the clear grey eyes that glowered up at him from beneath the bushy black brows of Sergeant Nolan.

He picked up the rifle gingerly, and began to recite the untimely speech in a fearsome and nervous stutter:

"Thank—you so kindly, sawgeant, I'm orfully obliged——."

Nolan stopped him with a snarl.

"'Shun!"

Salter sprang to attention. His heels met with a click.

"Be the hokey!" soliloquised the sergeant, still scowling critically at the giant fusilier, "'tis belike I've done my last job of work,

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putting the hat on your Glory Allyluyahs, but, anyways, I'm sending you back to your section like a sodger, and not like a whimpering nun with the pip!"

By a supreme effort Salter succeeded in eluding the sergeant's eyes. He peeped at the sand wherein the peppering bullets that no longer wrought him harm continued to kick up the little spurts of dust that had proved so annoying while he prayed.

Then he saw that Nolan was seated in a gradually widening pool of red.

On the instant the spell was broken.

"Sawgeant!"

He dropped to his knees beside the oppressor and passed a great ape-like arm behind his shoulders.

"Sawgeant! You're hit!——Here, take the blinking rifle!"

The scowl slowly melted out of Nolan's grey eyes as he essayed to refuse the weapon that Salter handed to his keeping.

"Don't be a blithering idiot!" he growled. "They've copped me fair! Me leg's bruk. Get back!"

Private Salter—remembering his brains, and that, for him, the end of all things earthly was near at hand—spoke to Sergeant Nolan as man to man.

Then he stood up bravely, the sergeant gathered to his breast like a little child.

He looked about hurriedly. The sangar seemed to be miles away. There were better shelters close by, anyhow, and Salter—though still realising that he had not much time for anything—wanted to try to think.

Not fifty paces to the right of him was a neat little natural arrangement in rocks which would afford far better protection than the sangar. It would accommodate half-a-dozen men at a pinch, while he and the sergeant made only two. He could carry Nolan there and wait for a better opportunity to make a rush for the sangar, the front of which this handy cleft faced at such an angle as practically to enfilade it.

To the cleft, accordingly, stalked Private Salter, unslain, and amazed only at the strength which enabled him to perform such a miracle despite the atrocious nature of his wound.

One or two fresh but minor hurts irritated him as he fought his way to the cleft, especially a small slug in the calf of the leg, which made him limp a little. But—as Salter looked at the case—what does one slug more or less in the calf of the leg matter to a man who has lost the top of his skull?

Nolan, shot through the hip, hugged his own and Salter's rifle, and amiably protested against Salter's well-intended efforts.

"'Tis only wasting time yez are, me boy!" he protested. "We'll all be hash in half-an-hour's time. They've got us, neck and crop—lock, stock, and barrel!"

Even as the sergeant exhorted him, the soldier seemed to give a jump. He did not actually jump, but Nolan knew what the quiver meant.

"Ye're hit agin! Dhrop me, ye omadhaun!" he commanded Salter.

From the side of a great oblong boulder, that lay like a natural portico across the top of the shallow embrasure in the rocky wall of the pass towards which Salter was hurrying, a puff of smoke expanded suddenly and rose upwards, round as a ball.

Save for the first start, the fusilier made no sign of discomfort. He did not even stagger.

From beneath the slowly rising ball of smoke the gaunt figure of a hillman sprang, and jumped to the rocks below, lithely as a deer.

"Dhrop me!" grunted Nolan into Salter's ear. "Dhrop me, or you're gone!"

Salter halted.

"Shoot him, blank you!" he gobbled at the sergeant, speaking like a man with a marble in his mouth. "You've the gun!"

From the boulder whence the hillman jumped, to the rocks beneath was a drop of over twelve feet. As the Afridi alighted—his cherished *jezail* in one hand, a heavy fighting knife in the other—he instinctively staggered for an instant to find his balance. Then he charged to make a double slaughtering.

As he charged Nolan fired, shooting with one hand.

The Afridi turned a complete somersault, and lay in front of the coveted haven, a corpse.

Salter said nothing, but started on his run again, cleared the body of the dead hillman at a bound, and set down Nolan, tenderly, with his back against the inner wall of rock.

"Keep on shooting, for the love of 'eavin, sawgeant!" he exhorted Nolan. "This is a little bit of all right, his nobs coming tumbling down this way, with a bright and saucy new *puggree* on his nut!"

He pointed to the unusually clean *puggree*, or turban, which had fallen from the head of the dead Afridi.

"It will do to tie up that cronky leg of yours, sawgeant," he explained, "and to 'old in what's left of my brains and my beauty teeth!"

He limped out and snatched up the

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One or two fresh but minor hurts irritated him as he fought his way to the cleft. . . . Nolan, shot through the hip, hugged his own and Salter's rifle, and amiably protested against Salter's well-intended efforts.

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puggree. Tearing off a couple of yards he wound it around his head and chin and mouth, covering the topless brim of his helmet with it, like a muffler.

"They've hit me in the jaw, too!" he added, gobbling his words, but in the tones of one who theorises on the weather of to-morrow. "It was a Lee-Metford bullet done it, or it would have tore the whole face off me. That's what made me jib outside there when the duck let off his blunderbuss. He copped me in the cheek, and I just had to spit out them teeth or swallow them. If it wasn't my mouth was open I'd have got hurt!"

Nolan looked at the giant curiously.

He saw there was a hole in Salter's right cheek as well as blood on his face.

"Tare and ages, me son!" said Nolan. "But 'tis yourself is the makings of a sodger and a man!"

Then, with Salter's assistance, he bound up his wounded leg as well as the nature of the circumstances would allow.

Meanwhile Salter looked out at the sangar. He had rolled a few rocks into the front of their little shelter as a breastwork, and felt, for the time being, as safe as a bank.

"They're knocking spots off our fellows, sawgeant," cried he. "We've got to try and help!"

Nolan, leaning back against the rocks, was endeavouring not to hum aloud the air of a ribald song which the nature of Salter's wound had brought vividly to his mind. Salter's suggestion bucked him up again. He looked over at the sangar with the comprehending eye of the seasoned soldier. It still had its garrison, but that garrison was becoming perilously shattered and weak.

From their sequestered point of vantage the two isolated men could observe that the brunt of the attack was being directed upon the doomed defenders from a point above and behind the nook wherein they themselves were hiding. But other parties of the assailants were working out and around on both sides of the sangar, as a prelude to rushing the breastwork whenever the defence became sufficiently slack to justify a charge.

Salter was a crack marksman. The sergeant was also a good shot.

"If we waste no powder, me son," said the latter, "and can pick off them niggers closing in on the sangar from the sides, our chaps will be able to hang on for half the day yet!"

Salter agreed, and started, with fevered alacrity, the good work of picking off, one by one, the leaders of the would-be charging party.

A drab figure, with black tips to it, detached itself from a boulder and went bumping and tumbling down the rocks to the right of the sangar. The leader of the attack on that side was out of action for good.

Again and again Salter fired, each time with the quick but careful aim of the first-class marksman, each time grinning more joyously, and rippling out quiet little chuckles of laughter.

Nolan, balancing the barrel of his rifle along a rock, also shot swiftly and well. The cordite was smokeless. The cracks of their Lee-Metfords were practically inaudible in the tumult of heavier fire, and the eager tribesmen who were worming themselves into a position to rush the sangar were picked off, one by one, and perished without realising whence they were being shot.

An hour went by.

The sangar was still inviolate, but not half a-dozen of its defenders could stand up to shoot.

Another hour passed.

Salter glanced warily at the grim face of Nolan. The Irishman pretended not to notice the glance, but he saw it. He knew what it meant. It was a matter which neither man cared to mention.

Their ammunition was nearly all expended.

From somewhere directly above their heads came the raucous war-shout of an Afridi, and the deafening reports of two *jezails*.

"We're going to get nobbed, Salter, me bhoy!" warned Nolan.

"Nobbed, be blowed!" snorted Salter. "I'll give 'em the prong before they nobs me, sawgeant! I'll give 'em the prong till I drops!"

He glared at Nolan from his pale, watery eyes as though courting contradiction.

"I will, sawgeant!" he repeated. "Wot do I care? I'm a goner! The top of me 'ead's shot off—they've got me number! Wot do I care?"

Whipping the bayonet from his belt, he clicked it on to the muzzle of his rifle. Then he jerked back his head as a bullet from Nolan's gun snapped past his ear.

The head and shoulders of a hillman that had protruded for an instant from the side of a boulder not ten paces off, slithered slowly out of sight again with that nonchalant ease of motion peculiar to the freshly dead.

Simultaneously, three shadows flopped

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Heaving himself forward, then swaying back again, . . . he pierced the foremost Afridi with the bayonet and swung him up—spitted like a beetle—on the steel. (*Page 112, col. 1.*)

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through the air from overhead—three plucky Bordermen had jumped bodily from the arch of rock to Salter's improvised breastwork, and had bounded thence into his shallow sanctuary.

Salter clenched his bleeding jaws in a cackle of triumphant laughter.

"Wot do I care?" he repeated philosophically. "There's the prong! Eat it you *soor!* Eat it!"

Heaving himself forward, then swaying back again, with the rhythmic impetuosity of a stage haymaker, he pierced the foremost Afridi with the bayonet and swung him up—spitted like a beetle—on the steel.

The point and handle of the sidearm, as well as the barrel of the rifle, had ripped through the hillman's body, and his chest rested on the thumb and forefinger of Salter's clenched fist, five inches back from the muzzle of his rifle.

Still forking the quick load upward and forward, the giant lunged Borderer and blade at the throat of the next assailant.

The red point, quivering from the dead man's back, caught his comrade directly under the chin and came out through the back of his neck.

Then, as the fusilier heaved the double load across the parapet, and strove to shake them from the point, the blade broke off at the stock.

The third Afridi lay dead beside him. Nolan had shot him in the face as he jumped to the ground.

Salter stared blankly at the red muzzle of his rifle and the smashed stock of the bayonet, the point of which still spitted the two dead hillmen he had thrown outside the breast-work. He sobbed in a heartbroken agony of desolateness and despair.

"If I'd the stinking tinker as made the hairpin!" he whimpered, "I'd crack his neck! It's hard, sawgeant! It's very hard! No prong! No——"

"Give that duck behind yez tne butt, avick!" broke in Nolan. "Do it quick!"

Another green-eyed and muscular mountaineer was on his knees, levelling a *jezail* at the soldier from the corner of a rock outside their breastwork. As Salter turned the man fired, but the bullet missed its mark. Before the smoke was well clear of the barrel, however, Salter had caught the hillman's weapon with his left hand, and, as the hardy fighter clung to the stock, the butt of Salter's rifle cracked through the side of the face and head by the ear, where the folds of the *puggree* afforded no protection.

The man went down like a felled ox.

Salter ran back to Nolan, and patted him affectionately on the back.

"But it ain't tasty!" he protested. "Wot I like is the prong! Swap rifles and lend us your bayonet, will you, sawgeant? You may say I'm only a hay-making farmer, but wot I says is: 'Give me the prong.'"

Nolan shook his head sadly. A bullet that missed his hip had severed his bayonet at the shank. It could not be used prong-fashion.

"I'm afeared we do be finished wid prongs—you and me, Salter, me son!" said he, relapsing into the broad Doric of his native pastures.

Salter's jaw sagged with disappointment.

"I've only the one clip left, sawgeant!" said he, holding up the steel-headed strip of cartridges.

Nolan nodded amicably. He had been waiting the announcement for some time.

"But the *soors* ain't crawling down by the sangar no more!" continued the private. "They got the hump about something or are coming down behind to do us two in first."

Nolan peered out towards the sangar.

The tribesmen who had been creeping down on either flank with the object of rushing its defences, had seemingly wearied of Salter's desolating fire, and determined to change their tactics.

That side of the pass was bare of the enemy. But as the few survivors in the sangar—there appeared to be only three rifles left—were popping an occasional shot at the ridge above and behind their little shelter, Nolan assumed that the hillmen were sneaking down under cover of the rocks to finish up Salter and himself before annihilating Captain Cruikshank and his party.

"True for yez, me lad!" said he to Salter, "they do be going to do us in, sure enough!"

His grey eyes again scanned the semi-silent shambles of the sangar.

"Eh, begobs, Salter, me son!" he exclaimed. "Stand up!"

Salter turned on him petulantly.

"Ain't I standing up?" he protested.

Nolan groaned as one who deplored the folly of all mankind.

"Stand up proper, ye half-baked rooky!" he gasped. "Can't yez see 'tis the captain? 'Tis hard hit he do be, but he's thrying to tell yez that ye're a sportsman and a good shot, and a credit to meself and the rigimint!

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Stand up, avick! 'Tis your last chanst. Presint arms and give him a gin'ral's salute, and show him ye're a man and a sodger!"

Raising himself gingerly above the breast-work of the doomed sangar, a man with an eye-glass staggered upright for an instant, waved a sword feebly, and sank back out of sight.

Salter, bracing himself stoutly—straight as a ramrod—brought up his gory rifle to the salute.

"Great Scott, major! It's one of Cruikshank's lot—thinks he's saluting a general. Off his bally chump, poor chap!"

The voice came from the boulder over Salter's head, whence aforetime jumped the Afridis he had "pronged" to Paradise.

A blonde-bearded face peered down.

"Hey there, you men!" called the owner of the beard. "Who are you? Are you both hurt?"

Salter gaped upwards—dazed and helpless—and gabbled out something like "All ri', sir!"

Then, calmly subsiding upon a rock, he perpetrated the unpardonable military solecism of sitting down in the presence of his superior officer.

"All ri', sir!" he muttered again irrelevantly; "me brains is gone!"

It was Nolan who sang out the proper and respectful answer.

"Southshire Fusiliers, sir—Sergeant Nolan and Private Salter. Both hit, sir—Private Salter, bad. Captain Cruikshank and the rest of the picket are in the sangar across the Pass, sir. I'm afraid they do be in a bad way!"

A stream of soldiers came scampering down the hill—the stretcher-men running for the sangar.

II.

"Well, my man," said the Surgeon-Colonel genially, as he stood over Salter in the hospital tent, "so you're Salter! Heard all about you from Captain Cruikshank and Sergeant Nolan. Saucy sort of top-knot you've got! First-aid field dressing taken from the enemy, isn't it? Well, we've got to patch up that jaw of yours, anyhow, and put a plug in that dimple before they come around to you with a sergeant's stripes or a V.C., or any of that sort of thing. Eh?"

Private Salter shook his *puggree*-bandaged head."

"It's no use, sir," he moaned deferentially. "It's me brains is gone! Took the lid clean orf me head, sir, they did! I'm booked!"

The Colonel sucked in his breath. The two doctor-captains looked sorrowfully at the doomed man. Field-surgery does not yet admit of new skulls being adjusted to the living subject—not at any point nearer than the Base Hospital, any way, and this was among the remotest hills of the Tirah.

"Nonsense, man!" said the Colonel. "We'll patch you up while you wait! Can't afford to ruin our reputations by letting a man with a little thing like a cracked crown die on our hands! Sit down now! We won't hurt you!"

Deftly—gently as a woman—he unwrapped the blood-soaked strip of the dead Afridi's *puggree* and carefully examined Salter's wound.

"The sponge, Fletcher, please, and the scissors!"

Salter could hear the request with hideous distinctness. He could see Fletcher handing the scissors to the Colonel. He wondered would he ever see or hear anything again, or would the scissors clip out for all eternity his sense of the existing world.

Then—awfully, frightfully, mocking him with an unimaginable mockery—the voice of Fletcher, magnified a thousandfold by Salter's straining ears, was raised in a lilt of indescribably callous ribaldry. The captain was humming that erstwhile popular melody, "A Little Bit Off the Top!"

"Now we'll look at that jaw!" said the Colonel. "That scratch on your scalp may smart a bit, but it's not bone deep—might have been done by your best girl's hairpin. Your skull is sound as a nut!"

Salter sprang to his feet.

"Me brains!" he shrieked.

Surgeon-Captain Fletcher grabbed him by one arm and held him in a grip like a vice. The other surgeon-captain caught his other arm.

"Sit down!" rasped the Colonel, "and let me plug up that hole in your cheek for you, or I'll put you under arrest!"

Salter sank back on the medicine-chest, and stared blankly at the Colonel.

"Me brains!" he repeated plaintively. "They're gone, sir!"

The Colonel rapped with firm white knuckles on the top of Salter's head.

"Brains!" he ejaculated testily. "Why, how do you think brains could get out under a thatch like that? Your head is solid bone throughout, my lad!—solid bone throughout!"

Salter blinked up at the laughing face of the Colonel.

No. The Colonel was not mocking him.

He buried his face in his hands and boo-hooed like a babe.

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By F. E. Baily.

Every year from late in May till late in September, the Summer Girl dominates the situation. Her favourite haunts are seaside and riverside places, but she is found all over the country. You may recognise her by the charming recklessness of her toilette, the prettiness of her face, the irresistible quality of her glance, her general atmosphere of sunburn and out-of-doors, and her trail of young men. We dissect the object in the following article.

The Summer Girl came in as the petticoat went out. Her title was manufactured in the United States, but she is just as much a feature of this country. She is the product of the Edwardian and Georgian eras, and has nothing in common with Victorian ideals.

The best way to describe her is to say that there is something about her which would make a missionary feel reckless, that she would lure a youthful Nut from the thither side of the Himalayas, and cause a professional misanthrope to fall in love. There is a touch of divine madness in her escapades; she never knew a chaperon, she was always the first to toboggan downstairs on a tea-tray, and the last in out of the moonlight. The author had her in mind when he wrote the famous lyric:

> When we did the Gaby glide,
> Well, the curate went outside
> And composed a special prayer for Nottin' 'Ill.

On Brighton, Margate, or Maidenhead, the Summer Girl descends not in single spies but in battalions. They are composed of fairly tall, slender girls from fifteen to nineteen years of age—the Summer Girl never grows old—some flappers, and some not. They all wear wonderfully chic linen frocks, marvellous shoes, and electrifying stockings of which a generous amount is always visible. Somewhere else in the scheme there will be a bow to match the stockings. The maiden's arms are generally bare to the elbow, and the neck of her blouse discloses a V of sunburnt skin.

There is a gladness in her eye that rejoices the heart of man, and a challenge in her walk, yet all the time she is haughty. Charlie must carry a pile of cushions down to the punt for her; George knows that only the most costly chocolates are acceptable; Alfred would not think of providing any but the best seats for the Pierrots or the concert on the pier. The Summer Girl tacitly but relentlessly puts them in their places.

In the earliest days of her career, when she has just blossomed from the awkward, leggy period into a charming little girl who, alas! knows exactly how pretty she is, she will not despise a fifteen or sixteen-year-old schoolboy pal, emerging from that blissful savagery which employs the taunt "only a girl!" And how she makes him pay for the sins of the past!

There is no such tyrant as the little, young Summer Girl over the perplexed, restive, inexperienced boy-cub. She tells him he is a freckled atrocity, and she hates him; she says he is only a rude schoolboy, and perfectly horrid—almost too horrid

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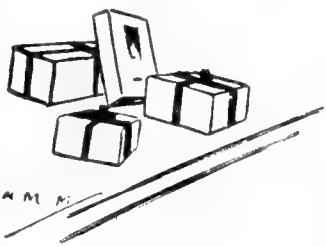
for a girl to be seen about with. Anecdotes of Jones who made sixty not out for the first eleven leave her unthrilled. All day long the poor, worried youth tries abjectly to propitiate her, and she enjoys the time of her life.

A little later in her development the Summer Girl will always be seen with her special boy, not a schoolboy, but an immaculately garbed young man, wearing semi-George Grossmith garments, who sweeps back his hair in one slithery mass, and scents the air faintly with an aroma of Egyptian cigarettes.



He is invariably prosperous, and often owns a fast two-seater car, sporty of body, which he drives bare-headed, in some miraculous way avoiding the faintest speck of dust. There is no hauteur like that of his girl as she leans back in her seat, apparently in the last stages of listlessness. These gilded types all seem to suffer from cold storage of the emotions. You may see them later in the lounge of their hotel, clad in perfect evening clothes, exchanging fewer than half-a-dozen exotic words, and supremely disdainful of everyone else. Presently, they will dance in exactly the same fashion. They seem to wither under the blight of clothes that may crease if the wearer laughs.

The Summer Girl is a young person of expensive tastes, and George knows that only the most costly chocolates are acceptable.

Sometimes the Summer Girl adopts the expedient of sport. This breed is made of sterner stuff, and companions the sporting youths. She flashes into view bearing a bulging bag of golf-clubs, squired by some lad in a senile tweed Norfolk suit, and shod with brogues as big as battleships. To-morrow she will scourge luckless tennis-balls with a destroying racquet. Yesterday afternoon saw her courting suicide on the carrier of an 8 h.p. motor-cycle, eating up the road at fifty miles an hour. Next week she will be tending the jib-sheet of somebody's boat, wet through, and very happy.

It is impossible to pass over in silence the Summer Girl taking her dip in the briny. Either she swims or she doesn't; if she does, there is no more to be said.

But the non-swimmer has her work cut out; she must swamp the prestige of her swimming rivals, and that necessitates the wiles of the serpent and woman combined.

The non-swimming Summer Girl is always very pretty, wears the most charming of bathing-suits, and never gets her hair wet. She steps into the water with the solemn air of one entering church; she hesitates, because the water is very cold. Then she glances up and perceives her boy approaching to lead her into mid-channel.

Her eye becomes fawn-like and startled; she gives him a timid hand; a wave breaks, and she says "Oh!" in plaintive resignation. One gathers that she is only a little girl, and the sea is so very large, and she is being rather brave to face it at all, and if she were not very fond of Algy . . .

And Algy, realising this, is as gentle as the best and most fearless always are. He guides her to the steps of her machine, where she sits, posing prettily and dabbling her toes. She waves graciously and encouragingly as he plunges off on his daily swim, and later, when the hair of the swimming girls is

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The presence of an immaculately garbed young man, who scents the air with an aroma of Egyptian cigarettes, marks a certain stage in the Summer Girl's career.

all lank and rats'-taily, she is as pretty as ever, and well ahead on the morning's work.

It is to her manner that the Summer Girl is chiefly indebted for her conquests. She is an amazing production of the modern spirit of liberty and latitude. She has more assurance at sixteen than her aunts have at sixty, or than her grandmother ever had ere going down to the grave.

Men and boys are open books. The short-skirted flapper of the seaside, seasoned by a score of flirtations, has absolutely no respect left in her composition for anything of the male species. After all, if the worst comes to the worst, if some singularly difficult and overbearing, haughty individual crosses her path, she has only to let him kiss her, or to refuse to let him kiss her, and he is a slave for evermore.

"Where is Romance?" someone may ask; "where is all the sweet and tender mystery that enshrouds the great things of life for budding womanhood? What about those rose-coloured dreams, peculiar to the late 'teens, in which Prince Charming comes riding along ready to win and woo the fortunate maiden of his choice?"

Well, I don't know where they have gone, if they ever existed. Certainly they do not trail their cobwebby substance over the bright brains of the Summer Girl. She knows the exact value to be attached to a squeeze of the hand; she is aware that just so long as she is a little smarter, wittier, prettier, and better dressed than the other girls, she will have the pick of the boys, the two-seaters, the side-cars, the theatre-seats, and the boating parties. She will get, in fact, as good as she gives, no more and no less, except she be exceptionally clever; then she will get a little better.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the Summer Girl is a great deal more practical,

There is no hauteur like that of the Summer Girl and her companion. Even when they dance they are supremely disdainfu of everyone else.

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business-like, far-seeing, and hard-headed than the Nut who admires her. He is the fly and she is the spider; the old song, "Men were deceivers ever," needs instant revision. If anyone is deceived, it is not the modern maiden. She knows to a fraction what a smile, or a glad eye, or what not, is worth, and never makes a mistake.

Born into a commercial age, she realises that the shy, retiring, timid, blushing creatures languish unsought, unamused, and uncared for. Boys have money and girls don't. But boys will spend their money on girls if girls will be beautiful, and attractive, and not too terribly straitlaced; and money buys chocolates, and motors, and other charming, desirable things, and there you are.

As the golden day merges into the moonlit mystery of night, the Summer Girl steps across that impalpable frontier which separates the world of every day from the country of romance.

She has dined, and done her hair afresh, and powdered her face. The garb of daytime has given place to something more filmy and mysterious. Her nature seems to alter with her clothing, and she becomes dreamy, reflective, clinging, willing to be loved.

No doubt there is some fixture arranged—a concert or theatre. Afterwards she will be taken to a café and given iced lemonade and deadly confectionery. And then comes the climax of the beautiful day.

Without seeming to notice what he is doing the boy of her choice leads her to some sheltered, secluded spot, where the corporation have kindly placed a garden seat. They sit down. Silence falls.

Then, gently and imperceptibly, his arm steals round her; perhaps she pretends to avoid it, perhaps she doesn't. Soon her head is on his shoulder, and her hand in his.

There they will sit peacefully and happily. No doubt he will kiss her once or twice, and quite gravely she will let him. He is thinking what a darling she is, and she—heaven knows—probably how much Maud paid for that blue silk cap, or whether another five shillings can be coaxed out of father.

Sometimes the Summer Girl adopts the expedient of sport, and flashes into view squired by some lad in a senile tweed Norfolk suit and brogues as big as battleships.

At last the hour grows late. Slowly they arise, and walk back arm in arm. If all is quiet along the Potomac he will kiss her good-night as they part.

Then the boy goes home to his boarding-house superb and uplifted, and the girl slips up to bed and quarrels with her sister, accusing her of eating all the chocolates.

What becomes of the Summer Girl later on I can't tell you. I never met either a married woman or a maiden aunt in the least like one.

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"A Long Drink," and one which the parrot seems to appreciate. *Photo, Miss M. L. Oliver.*

CAMERA PICTURES

Photo *Miss L. M. Nutter.*

Dog-lovers will all appreciate this delightful study of the head of an Old English Sheep Dog.

It is not necessary nowadays to be able to paint in order to produce beautiful pictures. The photographer runs the artist very close, as these reproductions from some of the choicest exhibits at the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain clearly prove.

PICTURE photography and snapshots are as far apart as the poles, and the amateur who presses the button and expects to find results as charming as those reproduced in these pages awaiting him in the developing dish, will be sadly disappointed. Infinite care and patience and considerable artistic ability are necessary if really beautiful effects are to be obtained.

At one time the photographer's chief aim was to get a perfectly "sharp" picture, usually with a cross light, so that the shadows might help to make the object photographed stand out more clearly. Now

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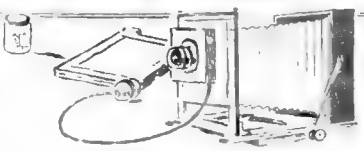
Photo *J. B. B. Wellington.*
"Temptation"—and a very keen one, too, judging by the small dog's hesitation.



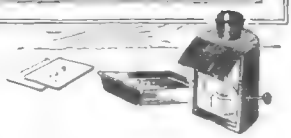
photography may justly be claimed as an "art," and can no longer be scorned by those endowed with artistic ability. The first thing to realise is that the disposition of light and shade may make or mar a picture.

This point is well illustrated in "A Long Drink," for delightfully as the parrot is posed, it is the lighting which gives this study its chief charm. The importance of "focus" can hardly be over-estimated. The soft, rather woolly outline in the "doggy" pictures is obtained by avoiding the old-fashioned method of getting the whole subject in focus, which would have resulted in each hair standing out like live wire.

Seaside photographs have a charm all their own, and the beach makes an admirable background against which to arrange artistic pictures. The sea itself offers a wide field, but for those who prefer to infuse a personal element into their work, there are always children ready and willing to pose with unwearying delight.

"Temptation" is a charming little beach study, and one can almost see the hesitation of the obstinate small dog waning before the lure of the

Photo *A. C. Cooper.*
"Bully" looks very formidable, but is probably far more good-tempered than he appears.



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biscuit so temptingly offered by the little maiden in the sunbonnet.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the value of a simple background. In "*Le Tiroir*" ("The Drawer") simplicity is the keynote, and there is nothing which could in any way distract attention from the girl. Here again the lighting is arranged with great skill, and the result is a most charming picture, and one full of suggestion to the imaginative.

For hints as to composition, amateurs would do well to study some of the world's famous pictures. Valuable tips as to posing and grouping might be gleaned in this way, and there is nothing to prevent the enthusiastic amateur from working out fresh pictures of his own on the lines of some of the well-known masterpieces.

If he is wise, however, he will refrain from attempting anything too ambitious at first, as any scene calling for an elaborate setting and intricate poses would require a great deal of skill and experience to cope with successfully. There are plenty of pictures containing two or three figures, which are quite within the powers of the careful amateur, and will yet give plenty of scope to his artistic powers.

The heroine of "An Anxious Moment" is probably a little pickle, but a very lovable one at that. So absorbed is she in the momentous task of balancing the brick that she has apparently quite forgotten the camera,

Photo *Guido Rey, Turin.*

"The Drawer" is a picture full of charm and suggestiveness, and one round which many stories might be woven.

which perhaps accounts for her natural pose and entire absence of self-consciousness. Or it may be she was taken unawares—who knows?

Another pretty child study is "Left by the Tide," in which a little girl is pouncing with childish eagerness on a glorious piece of seaweed lying on the sea-washed beach. There is an air of breeziness about the scene; one feels sure it is a windy day, for the child's hair is ruffled and her loose

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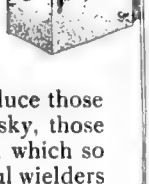
Photo *Neg. Rotogravure, Mj.*
"An Anxious Moment" is a charming little child study.



frock has blown about her bare legs.

After all, photography can do what the artist may strive long to attain, for it can reproduce those momentary effects of sea and sky, those fleeting changes of expression, which so often elude even the most skilful wielders of the brush.

Moreover, photography has the advantage of speed; a scene which it would take an artist many hours to produce through the medium of paint and canvas, can be recorded in a moment by the camera, and with absolute fidelity.

The range which can be covered by the camera is ever-widening, and includes subjects, such as night and moonlight effects, which it is most difficult for an artist to handle, since naturally he cannot paint in the dark, and has to trust largely to memory to obtain his results.

For those with a keen eye for beauty there is no more delightful hobby than that of photography; it is a means of expression which is within the reach of practically all who desire an outlet for their artistic faculties.

Photo *R. A. R. Bennett.*
The heroine of "Left by the Tide" has certainly found a prize in the glorious piece of wet seaweed.

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ANOTHER SPLENDID STORY OF SILAS Q. PINCH.

AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY.

By Pearson Choate.

The ingenuity of Pinch is never-failing; no task is beyond his powers. He can cope with any situation, and the man who tries to set him an impossible task is apt to come in a bad second, as did the extraordinary client who figures in this delightful story.

I.

For a moment the elderly stranger who had come to see Pinch hesitated. The surroundings were hardly what he had expected. In the basement of the premises was housed a school for cinematograph operators, a fly-blown confectioner's shop occupied the ground floor, and above was the office of an emigration agent. It seemed odd. But the number was 3395 High Holborn, and on the wall, just within the doorway, was painted, in conspicuous black lettering:

"Third Floor,
Mr. Silas Q. Pinch."

It was possible, of course, that Mr. Silas Q. Pinch, Sensationalist, had established his headquarters in this tumbledown tenement with malice aforethought. Certainly a man could conduct an unusual business here, the elderly stranger reflected, without attracting too much attention. The thought reassured him, and gave him sufficient confidence to ascend the rickety staircase which led up to the third floor of the building.

The staircase was narrow and steep, and demanded some climbing. The visitor made the ascent slowly and with difficulty; obviously he was not capable of sustained physical exertion. He was wearing a frock-coat and a top-hat of antique pattern. These things are significant. He was plainly of that older generation, who knew not athletics in their youth, and in their old age suffer from asthma, and ultimately succumb to heart trouble.

More significant still was the fact that his long and distinguished face was fringed by a flowing white beard, which accentuated his eminently respectable appearance. It may be noted in this connection, in spite of the well-worn proverb, that appearances are just as likely not to be, as to be, deceptive.

The painted sign announcing the tenancy of Mr. Silas Q. Pinch was repeated above a low door on the third floor landing. The elderly stranger threw open this door; then he drew back involuntarily. He had expected to enter some sort of business office. Instead, he stood on the threshold of a small attic.

A corpulent little man sat at a plain, deal table in the centre of the attic, reading a volume in a flamboyant yellow cover. The room was carpetless and undecorated. There was a telephone instrument on the table. A second chair was the only other piece of furniture visible.

"Come right in, shut the door, and take the spare chair," the occupant of the attic called out, without looking round. "There is a most pernicious draught from that door—when it is left open."

The stranger did as he was told.

"I was reading Gaboriau. I find him stimulating," the little man at the table continued conversationaliy, putting aside his book

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with apparent reluctance as the visitor sat down. "In these days of prosaic realism one cannot have too much of romantic fiction. I hope you agree with me."

The elderly stranger did not express any opinion on this nice point of literary criticism. The ascent of the staircase had left him rather breathless. In a moment or two, however, he achieved speech.

"Are you Mr. Pinch?" he gasped.

"I will not deceive you. I am Pinch, the Sensationalist, no other," the little man replied. "I am the one and only Silas Q., master of the art of the unexpected, universal provider of sensations, adventure agent, creator of new amusements, purveyor of piquant pranks, inventor of new interests, the only laugh in London, the cure of all mental ills—in a word, Pinch. I have only to add that my fees are moderate, that my powers are illimitable, and that I am entirely at your service in any of the capacities I have mentioned."

"I was reading Gaboriau. I find him stimulating," the little man at the table continued conversationally, putting aside his book with apparent reluctance as the visitor sat down.

Pinch delivered this whimsical harangue with an irresistible air of comical gusto. A provocative twinkle lurked in his merry blue eyes, behind his big gold-rimmed spectacles. An infectious smile lit up his round and shining countenance. In contrast with his visitor, although he was a trifle bald and palpably double-chinned, he looked astonishingly youthful.

The elderly stranger glanced at the little man curiously from under a pair of shaggy eyebrows.

"I have heard something of you, Mr. Pinch," he said. "I am told that your activities are as unusual as your ability."

"My clients *will* talk about me," Pinch murmured apologetically. "It is my misfortune, not my fault."

"My business is serious."

In a flash Pinch became as solemn as a mute at a funeral.

"I can be serious, too," he replied gravely. "What can I do for you?"

"I believe that you are the man for my purpose," the stranger said slowly. "This interview is, I presume, in any case, strictly confidential?"

"You say that you have heard of the Sensationalist," Pinch replied quietly. "I do not think that you will have heard that he betrays the confidence of his clients. You may speak openly."

The stranger ran his fingers thoughtfully through his flowing beard. Then he straightened himself in his chair.

"I accept your assurance of secrecy," he said.

He paused.

"I want to die," he announced calmly.

For a moment there was silence. Then Pinch chuckled. If he could be serious, he could not, apparently, be serious for long.

"Is not death the one certainty, my dear sir?" he asked. "Time will surely fulfil your wish. You are old. Patience—that is all that is necessary."

The stranger smiled in his beard.

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"You misunderstand me. I will make my meaning clear," he said. "I feel that I can trust you, Mr. Pinch. I wish to die so that I may live. The death I seek will set me free. My friends will grieve a little, and my enemies will rejoice a little, perhaps, over my decease. My life in my old haunts will be over. But all the time, I propose to be alive in some happier sphere as another man. A supposed, a fictitious death is what I seek. Do you follow me?"

Pinch looked at his strange visitor narrowly.

"I follow you," he replied. "A fictitious death—that is a very different affair."

"Is it possible?"

"It is the boast of Silas Q. Pinch, Sensationalist," Pinch replied sententiously, "that with him all things are possible."

There was a brief silence. Pinch produced his cigar-case, and, having proffered it to his visitor, who refused with a gesture of the hand, he himself selected a cheroot, and lit it with some deliberation. The Great Pinch had a quick instinct for character and motive, which had stood him in good stead more than once in the exercise of his unique profession. Usually he was able to make up his mind about a client in a few minutes. Now he found it difficult to come to a decision respecting this harmless-looking old gentleman who talked so calmly of feigning death.

"I should be prepared," the old gentleman said, speaking unexpectedly, as if there had been no pause in the conversation, "to pay you your own price to make a fictitious death possible in my case."

There was another brief silence.

Suddenly Pinch leant forward in his chair.

"Who are you?" he asked sharply.

The old gentleman was startled, and hesitated—for a moment.

"My name is Ord," he stammered. "I am Samuel Ord."

"And what are you?"

"That is not material."

He had recovered his composure.

Pinch rolled his cheroot about his mouth reflectively. Then he spoke with deliberate emphasis.

"When a man wishes to deceive the world into the belief that he is dead, while he is still alive, he has a motive," he said. "That motive may be strictly honourable. On the other hand, it may be dishonourable. I should like to know the motive in your case."

Mr. Samuel Ord moved a trifle uneasily in his chair.

"I am not prepared," he replied, "to discuss my motive."

"That is unfortunate," said Pinch. "I must ask you one other question. Why have you applied to me in the matter? It is a delicate affair. To introduce a second party into the transaction is to add to its risk."

"I have made many plans in the hope of managing the enterprise single-handed," Mr. Samuel Ord replied, "but of none of them could I feel sure that it would lead to success. Then I heard some men discussing your remarkable ingenuity. I decided that you were the man to assist me. For your silence I shall pay you handsomely."

"A dead man," Pinch remarked significantly, "cannot continue to draw on his banking account."

"A live man," Mr. Samuel Ord replied with equal significance, "can draw on a banking account to which he has already transferred the dead man's money."

Pinch examined the growing ash at the end of his cheroot critically.

"It is rather out of my usual line of business," he murmured. "Still that in itself is an attraction. I daresay I can meet you." He paused. "When would you like to die—officially?" he asked, with a complete change of manner.

"As soon as possible."

Pinch looked at his watch.

"Will sometime after midnight to-night suit you?" he asked placidly.

Mr. Samuel Ord became almost animated. His eyes shone.

"You have a scheme?" he demanded quickly.

Pinch ignored the question.

"You will saunter down the Strand side of Trafalgar Square at midnight to-night," he said imperturbably. "You will be dressed just as you are at present, but you will wear an overcoat. Have your pocket-book, or some letters, or your card-case in your overcoat pocket. They will serve to identify the corpse. I shall meet you in the Square. It will all be absurdly easy. Mr. Samuel Ord will be dead to-morrow morning, I promise you. Can you find your way out now? I believe that I am going to be rather busy."

Mr. Samuel Ord rose slowly to his feet and looked at the Great Pinch searchingly for a long moment. His gaze was met by the blandest of bland smiles.

"Trafalgar Square—midnight," he said. "I shall be there."

Then he left the attic, closing the door quietly behind him.

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"Rogue, madman, humorist, or old fool—which is he?" Pinch murmured, when he was alone. "I wonder. I must know before to-night. I see distinct possibilities——"

He chuckled blithely.

II.

The clocks of the town had only just struck twelve, when Pinch, who was in evening dress, appearing from clubland in Pall Mall, strolled across Trafalgar Square to keep his appointment with Mr. Samuel Ord, but the old gentleman was already waiting for him at the Strand corner. Mr. Samuel Ord was wearing an overcoat as Pinch had directed. The coat was of a solemn type, and made him look positively patriarchal.

"Suppose we take a walk?" Pinch said. "We have plenty of time."

"I am in your hands, Mr. Pinch," the old gentleman murmured urbanely.

Pinch took his arm and led him across to the Mall, down which pleasant avenue they sauntered, under the trees.

"I have been thinking of your little affair, Ord," said Pinch suddenly. "I am afraid that it will have to be suicide. Have you any objection?"

"None at all," Mr. Samuel Ord replied calmly. "On the contrary, the idea seems to be attractive—distinctly attractive."

"It will produce a certain amount of scandal, you know," Pinch remarked.

Mr. Samuel Ord stroked his flowing beard judicially.

"The more scandal," he replied, "the better. It will emphasise, and to some extent verify, it appears to me, my decease."

"Precisely so," Pinch chuckled. "I am glad you see that. Really, it is a pleasure to work for you, my dear sir. You have perception."

The old gentleman bowed gravely in acknowledgment of the compliment.

They turned to the left at Buckingham Palace, and, skirting St. James' Park, came out, a little later, on to the Embankment, where they walked slowly along in the direction of Hungerford Bridge.

"It is the most picturesque night scene in London," Pinch declared, as they paused to admire the river view with its countless lights. "Take a good look round, Ord. You are about to die, you know. By the way, have you any last messages for your bereaved family and sorrowing friends?"

"I have no messages," Mr. Samuel Ord replied gravely,

Pinch looked at his watch.

"It is not far off one o'clock," he announced. "We will get to business. Listen to your instructions. I have chosen Hungerford Bridge as the scene of your rash act. There is the bridge," he explained, pointing to where the huge girders showed, a blurred mass, against the night sky. "The place is suitable and not without similar associations. Your part is simple. You will proceed ahead of me to the bridge, mount the steps, and walk across.

"It is a railway bridge, you know, with a narrow path on one side. The footpath is little used at this time of night. A youthful police-constable is supposed to patrol the footpath. He will almost certainly be stationed at this end of the bridge. You will pass him. Just before you come to the far end of the bridge you will slip off your overcoat, and let it fall to the footpath. I presume," he added, "that you have your visiting card or some similar means of identification, as I suggested, in your overcoat pocket?"

Mr. Samuel Ord nodded his head.

"Having dropped your overcoat on to the footpath," Pinch continued, "you will walk straight on, and leave the bridge as quickly as possible. The rest is my affair. I shall follow you on to the bridge, and be a little distance behind you. I count on the bridge being deserted. If anyone, in addition to the constable and myself, is in sight, you must loiter about until he has gone, before you drop your overcoat. I hope I make myself clear?"

The old gentleman nodded his head a second time.

"On leaving the bridge you will find yourself in Belvedere Street, S.E.," Pinch went on. "You will turn to the right, and walk straight ahead. Until you are well away from the bridge you had better keep out of view as much as possible. Happily, Belvedere Street is narrow, and not excessively lighted. There may be policemen about; you ought to be able to avoid their notice. In a few minutes you will come out at the south end of Westminster Bridge. There you will wait until I join you. It will not matter by that time whether anyone sees you or not. I shall do my best not to keep you waiting long."

"But what are you going to do, Mr. Pinch?" the old gentleman asked curiously.

"I will answer no questions," Pinch replied with a chuckle. "To the bridge—advance."

Mr. Samuel Ord hesitated for a moment, seemed about to speak, then changed his mind and obeyed. Leaving Pinch he set out

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alone towards Hungerford Bridge, walking, for so old a man, quite briskly. Pinch followed him unostentatiously, at a discreet distance.

Mr. Samuel Ord mounted the steps which led up from the Embankment to Hungerford Bridge. Then he looked about him. The youthful police-constable of whom Pinch had spoken stood a few yards along the bridge footpath, resting his arms on the bridge railing, and looking down at the dark waters of the Thames far below. There was no one else in sight. Mr. Samuel Ord walked past the constable. Half way across the bridge he paused to enjoy the view, which must always rank as one of the sights of London.

The night was fine. The river swirled and eddied at full tide. A blaze of light from the many windows of the great hotels on the left marked the late revels of Society. Street lamps showed, pinpoints of colour, in the distance. Above were the stars.

Mr. Samuel Ord gazed at it all with appreciative eyes for some minutes.

A fussy little tug, drawing a long line of empty barges, passed silently under the bridge, down the river.

Mr. Samuel Ord came to himself with a start.

"But I'm forgetting my part," he murmured, smiling oddly.

He looked back along the bridge. Pinch had appeared on the footpath. The little man had lingered, too, to gaze at the lights and the river. The young police-constable had not moved. Pinch was standing between the constable and his elderly client—an equal distance from each of them.

Mr. Samuel Ord undid the buttons of his overcoat. Then he resumed his walk.

An early morning train rattled across the bridge on the permanent way to the right of the footpath. Mr. Samuel Ord waited until the rumbling echoes roused by the train had ceased; then he looked round him. He was near the end of the bridge, with Pinch some distance behind him. Beyond Pinch was the police-constable; no one else was in sight.

Mr. Samuel Ord slipped out of his overcoat, let it fall on the footpath, and walked on quickly.

A moment brought him to the end of the bridge. He began to descend the wooden incline which leads from the bridge to the street. He was half-way down the incline when a cry, in which horror and warning were most startlingly blended, rang out from the bridge behind him. He turned and retraced his steps, crouching low and moving stealthily to avoid observation.

Pinch, who was clearly responsible for the cry, was running along the footpath of the bridge, as if in a race. A little distance behind him followed, at a run also, the youthful police-constable, who appeared to have been suddenly galvanised into action.

Pinch reached the spot where the overcoat lay on the footpath. He snatched the coat up hastily. Then he dashed wildly to the bridge railing and gazed over it down at the river below.

Mr. Samuel Ord had seen enough. He turned again and descended the incline hastily to the street.

On the bridge, when the constable caught up with Pinch, the little man was still gazing down at the river.

"Did you see him—an old gentleman?" Pinch cried excitedly to the constable. "I was watching him. He was in front of me. Suddenly he threw off his overcoat"—he held up the garment in question—"and scrambled on to the railing. I shouted. He looked round at me. Then he fell——"

Pinch broke off there. His sense of the horror of the tragedy which he pretended to have just seen, and which he now described with the vivid pantomime of an eye-witness, obviously overcame him.

"A suicide. We must warn the river police and get a boat out at once," the constable replied quickly, with admirable presence of mind. "You had better come with me, sir. I am sorry——"

He turned and hurried back along the bridge. Pinch, nothing loth, accompanied him, still holding Mr. Samuel Ord's discarded overcoat.

"I saw the old gentleman come on to the bridge," the constable continued. "He didn't look the suicide kind of party at all. If I had thought this was going to happen, I should have watched him. I was looking the other way. The bridge is long. You can't be everywhere. If you had not shouted I should never have known that the old fellow had gone over. A lot go quietly like that——"

Meanwhile, Mr. Samuel Ord was lurking in the shadow of a doorway in Belvedere Street, S.E., in order to avoid a belated pedestrian who was passing down that narrow thoroughfare. The pedestrian went by. Mr. Samuel Ord smiled in his beard. For an old gentleman who had a shrewd suspicion that his death by suicide had just

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been established as a fact in a police report, he was uncommonly cheerful.

"Pinch is immense," he murmured. "The ingenious simplicity of the scheme is astounding. There can hardly be a hitch now. Mr. Samuel Ord is dead—dead——"

The thought, it was obvious, delighted the old gentleman. His flowing white beard shook with his suppressed laughter.

Before long he ventured out of his hiding-place. The street was deserted. Keeping well in the shadows, he worked his way stealthily down the silent thoroughfare, and very soon he came out at the end of Westminster Bridge. Here, remembering Pinch's statement that when he was once well away from Hungerford Bridge it would not matter if anyone saw him, he showed himself more boldly.

Pinch . . . snatched the coat up hastily. Then he dashed wildly to the bridge railing and gazed over it down at the river below.

He took up his stand on the Westminster Bridge pavement. Some time passed, and altogether it was rather a long wait. Happily, all was quiet, and there were few people about. In any case, Mr. Samuel Ord reflected whimsically, no one was likely, now or later, to connect him with a suicide further down the river.

Suddenly a motor-car appeared coming over the bridge. It was a two-seated car of racing build, and it was being driven at considerable speed. The driver pulled up the car near where Mr. Samuel Ord stood on the pavement. The driver was Pinch.

"There is room for another," he said.

Mr. Samuel Ord scrambled into the vacant seat in the car beside the little man, and Pinch drove off at once, straight ahead. As soon as the car was out upon the main road he began to talk, glancing round at his companion from behind his shining spectacles with a provocative twinkle in his merry blue eyes.

"Mr. Samuel Ord threw himself over Hungerford Bridge at 1.15 a.m. this morning," he announced. "The river police are at this moment out on the river in a boat looking for the body. They do not expect to recover it. 'He will be in the mud,' they told me.

"It is a clear case of suicide. The police have the facts—such as they are. They kept me, as the only eye-witness of the tragedy, to give them the details. The affair seems likely to become yet another unsolved mystery.

"All that is known of the deceased is that his name appears to have been Samuel Ord. This fact was gleaned from some visiting-cards found in the pocket of the overcoat which he threw off prior to his mad plunge. He was probably an American. 'Texas, U.S.A.,' was engraved on his card. Neither the constable on duty on the bridge nor I could give any description of the deceased.

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He was an old gentleman—that was all we noticed. The police have nothing more to work on. There will be short paragraphs about the suicide in the morning newspapers, and perhaps the evening newspapers may give the tragedy more space. There is no doubt about it: Mr. Samuel Ord is dead beyond all question."

The old gentleman, thus informed of his own death, leant back in his seat in the car and laughed.

"It was magnificent, Mr. Pinch," he said. "I heard your cry. It startled me. I turned back a little way and saw you and the constable running along the bridge, and I understood then what was happening. Your horror was superb—so simple, so circumstantial, so convincing—a consummate piece of work. I congratulate you—and myself—whole-heartedly."

Pinch chuckled melodiously.

"My dear sir, you cover me with blushes," he said. "I am delighted to have served you and to have satisfied you. My only regret is that I had to keep you waiting so long—there were formalities to be gone through with the police. If they recover the body, they will want me as a witness at the inquest. For the time being I am Mr. George Jackson, a visitor to London who is staying at the Savoy Hotel. I booked my room there this afternoon. Then I had to pick up the car in Whitehall and take it over from the chauffeur."

"I did not find the waiting tedious." Mr. Samuel Ord replied urbanely. "May I inquire where we are going now?"

"I am running you down to a little place I have in Kent," Pinch explained genially. "The morning air is fresh; we shall see the sun rise. By breakfast-time we ought to reach The Cabin—that is the name of my little bungalow. I propose, if you like the place, to leave you there, while I return to town for newspapers. I presume that you will accept the newspaper reports of your death as sufficient proof of the complete success of our scheme?"

"Such evidence," Mr. Samuel Ord replied, "will more than satisfy me."

"A few hours in the quiet of the country will do you no harm, and will give you time to consider your position," Pinch proceeded. "Being dead, it will be as well for you to keep out of the way for a while. Quite apart from that, I shall be charmed if you will be my guest for a day or two. A pleasant garden, something of a library, a competent *chef*, a cellar and some cigars that may be worth your attention, are at your service. Let The Cabin be your Hades."

"I shall be delighted to accept your hospitality, Mr. Pinch," Mr. Samuel Ord replied. "The Hades of which you speak sounds most attractive."

He smiled reflectively.

"The terrors of death," he added, "have, I find, been greatly exaggerated."

Pinch chuckled appreciatively. There was a glorious sunrise.

The little bungalow of which Pinch spoke so modestly proved to be a country house of considerable pretensions, which stood out as a landmark on one of the Kentish uplands, and was approached by an avenue of well-grown trees.

As soon as Pinch drew up the car in front of the house, a manservant appeared at the door.

"Have breakfast for two ready in twenty minutes, Brooke," Pinch told the servant. "That," he said, turning to his guest, "will give you time to make something of a toilette. I will send my man to you. For myself," he added, displaying his crumpled dress-shirt, "I must have a bath and get into some reasonable clothes."

Breakfast was served on a broad verandah, built in the Colonial style at the back of the house, which commanded a magnificient panorama of the surrounding countryside. The fresh air of the morning was an incentive to appetite. Pinch and his elderly guest made a most satisfactory meal.

"Is there anything that I can do for you in town?" Pinch inquired when breakfast was over. "I suppose you will wish to have the usual obituary notice inserted in the best newspapers? 'Mr. Samuel Ord, in London, quite suddenly. No flowers, by request,' should suit the case."

"That will do admirably," agreed the guest.

Pinch rose to his feet.

"I shall be back as soon as possible," he said. "It will be necessary for me to see what the police are doing, and I must buy the newspapers. I hope you will not find the day tedious. Brooke will do his best to make you comfortable. Do not hesitate to express your wishes."

Then the little man returned to his car, and left in a cloud of dust.

Mr. Samuel Ord spent a very pleasant day at The Cabin. He put in some hours examining the library of which Pinch had spoken. It proved to be a comprehensive collection of standard works in half-a-dozen

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languages. A capital little lunch was served for him at his own request on the broad verandah. Brooke attended to his wants assiduously.

In the afternoon he walked round the grounds. The gardens were laid out in the most lavish style. The contrast between the unfurnished attic in High Holborn which Pinch used for his office, and the amenities of his little bungalow in Kent, was startling.

The guest realised that Pinch, even in this matter, was, as he boasted, truly master of the art of the unexpected. A peaceful doze in a chair placed under a tree in the garden in the front of the house, rounded off Mr. Samuel Ord's afternoon agreeably. He was awakened by the stir incidental to the return of Pinch in his car.

Pinch took the cheque and held it, without looking at it, face downwards in his hand. "Shall I tell you the name in which this cheque is drawn?" he asked provocatively.

Pinch at once joined his guest in the garden. He was carrying a large bundle of newspapers under his arm. His eyes shone; his smile was broadly triumphant.

"The newspapapers have done you well," he announced gleefully. "Mr. Samuel Ord is dead beyond all possibility of resurrection. See for yourself."

He handed the newspapers to his guest.

"It is an uncommon kind of luxury for a man to read of his own death," he added whimsically. "I shall remember that fact when I present my little bill."

Mr. Samuel Ord glanced through the newspapers, and read his own obituary in their columns, written in various styles. In one paper his suicide was recorded in a brief, businesslike paragraph. In another an imaginative sub-editor had touched up the bare report and extended it into a half-column story full of vivid description.

One enterprising evening journal had gone so far as to send a reporter to make inquiries at the American Embassy with reference to the tragedy. The reporter had ascertained that Mr. Samuel Ord was not known there. Mr. Samuel Ord smiled when he read the latter statement.

"I claim complete success," Pinch crowed.

"I admit the claim," Mr. Samuel Ord replied gravely. "You spoke of your little bill. What is the amount?"

"The expenses have been negligible, and the case has not demanded much of my time," Pinch replied, with a fine show of candour. "I will accept your own figure."

Mr. Samuel Ord produced a cheque-book and a fountain-pen from his pockets. Resting the cheque-book on his knee, he wrote a cheque with marked deliberation, detached it from the book, and handed it to Pinch. There was an odd smile on his lips.

Pinch took the cheque and held it, without looking at it, face downwards in his hand.

"Shall I tell you the name in which this

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cheque is drawn?" he asked provocatively. "You will observe that I have not looked at the signature as yet."

Mr. Samuel Ord leant back in his chair.

"If you can."

"The name is Braintree," said Pinch suavely—"Henry Braintree, to be precise. In 'Who's Who' and similar books of reference that name is followed by a long list of letters representing various degrees and well-deserved honours. You are Henry Braintree—sometime Professor of Physics in the University of Oxford—author of many learned treatises and monumental tomes—and for the future, I hope, my very good friend."

Astonishment overwhelmed the white-bearded old gentleman, who still sat in his chair, fronting Pinch. His shaggy eyebrows ascended his forehead. His jaw dropped.

"How did you know me?" he gasped.

Pinch chuckled melodiously.

"You gave me a certain amount of trouble. You might have been anything—a defaulting banker, for example, anxious to secure a fictitious death in order to escape the law," he replied lightly. "It was necessary that I should know who you were before I met you at night. The name Ord, I found, provided no clue. Then I remembered that you had said that you had overheard some men talking about me. I have taken care that the only people who talk about me are 'somebodies.' If you had been admitted to their conversation you were 'somebody,' too. I looked up my friend Lord Liston, whose misfortune it is to know everybody who is anybody. I described you to him. He knew you at once.

"'That is dear old Braintree,' he said. 'He is in town just now. Have you met him? I was talking about you the other night at Dorchester House, and he was there and seemed interested.'"

Pinch paused. His smile broadened, his eyes sparkled with mischief. His pride in his own cleverness was undisguised and altogether disarming.

"Liston told me," he went on, "that you had a keen sense of fun and wanted to meet me.

"'You two will make a great pair,' he said.

"I did not tell him that I had already met you. I do not talk of one client to another without express permission. But I was able to keep my appointment with you a few hours later with an easy mind."

"You have been too much for me, Pinch," Professor Braintree exclaimed. "I was flattering myself that I had deceived you, and all the time the Sensationalist was playing with me, and saving up this ignominious exposure as—the final sensation."

"You admit it?" Pinch crowed triumphantly.

"My dear sir, I admit everything," Professor Braintree replied. "You are Pinch—the Sensationalist—inimitable—amazing."

Pinch bowed comically.

"And Mr. Samuel Ord, who is now dead—what of him?"

"Mr. Samuel Ord never was alive, to my knowledge," the Professor replied slyly. "I invented him for our purpose—a fictitious man for a fictitious death."

"Precisely. That made it all possible," Pinch chuckled. "The police, you see, will hardly be able to trace the relatives and past of a man who never lived. Consequently they will give us no trouble. Is it not a droll world, Braintree?"

There was a brief pause. Professor Braintree was marvelling at the ingenuity which had rendered his attempt to set the Great Pinch an impossible task—or, at least, to deceive him—abortive.

"I have an inspiration," Pinch announced suddenly, with a dramatic gesture. "We will devote this cheque," he went on gleefully, "to the erection of some permanent memorial to Mr. Samuel Ord. Mr. Samuel Ord deserves well of both of us. A tablet in a church or a memorial fountain on the Embankment would be suitable."

"You are incorrigible, Pinch!" cried Professor Braintree.

(Pinch is a versatile fellow. Next month his client is a lady of rank and beauty, and the story of his efforts on her behalf make most amusing reading, and are far too good to be missed.)

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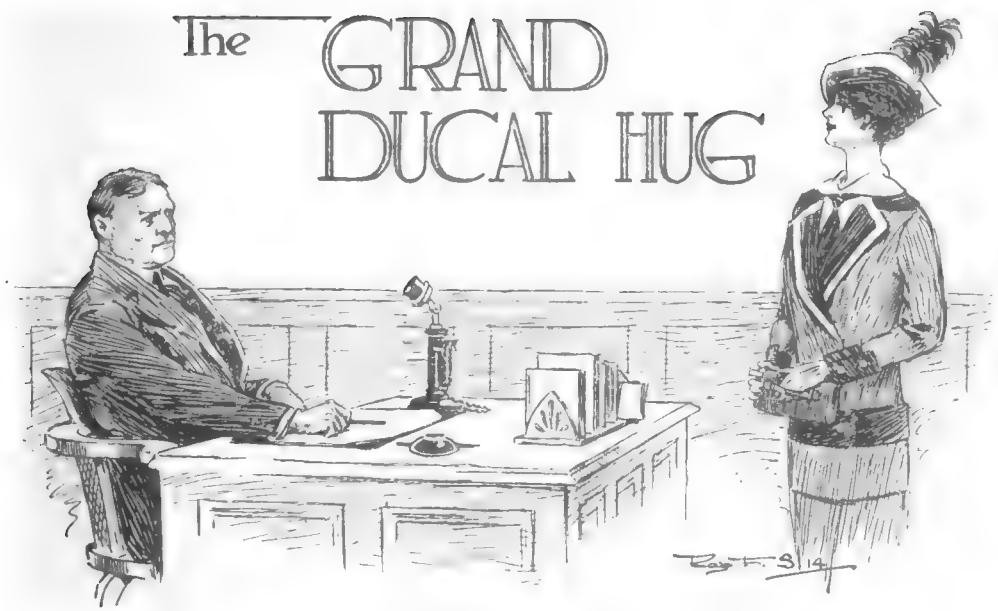
The GRAND DUCAL HUG



A Story of Modern Journalism.

By Max Rittenberg.

I.

It was Amateur Day at the offices of the *Daily Truth*. Once a month, Sir Benjamin Budgen, Bart., newspaper proprietor, set aside a day for granting interviews to the horde of aspirants for posts at Budgen House, the home of the *Daily Truth* and its many allied journals.

He enjoyed it. He relished the searching for the grain of talent in the midst of the chaff of mediocrity. It was an exercise in the difficult art of summing up men and women. Any batch on Amateur Day might contain the germ of the ideal star reporter, news editor, fashion editor, special article writer, magazine editor, writer of contents bills, or what not in the hundreds of possible posts in his gift. Budgen House was always a kaleidoscope of men and women, shifting about from post to post in the effort of the chief to make a perfect harmony of a newspaper organisation.

At 5.15, in due order of a long line of appointments, the entrant to his private office was a girl of twenty-four, slight, trim, smartly (and of course, scantily) gowned, piquant rather than pretty or beautiful, with a hint of dare-devilry in her eyes, a hint of strength in her firm chin, and more than a hint of excellent self-possession in her carriage. Her card gave the name of Miss Peggy Locke.

"Well," began Sir Benjamin, running his eye over her rapidly, "I suppose, like the rest of 'em, you want to write for the *Daily Truth?*"

"I put my ambition a rung higher than that," returned Peggy smilingly.

"Stick on the label."

"I want the *Daily Truth* to want me to write for it."

"Good!" said Sir Benjamin appreciatively. "Always as well to pitch your ambition beyond the practical. D'you realise that we can take our pick of the literary talent of Great Britain and Ireland, the Dominions and Dependencies, and all the translatable rest of the world?"

"If that's the case," retorted Peggy, "why don't you sometimes print it?"

"If and when we don't, it's because young authors put a fancy price on themselves. Revealing an office secret, we're a commercial undertaking."

Peggy laughed at this pretended revelation—a wholesome, infectious laugh.

"Now, young lady, what can you do?" continued Sir Benjamin.

"I'm Girton, honours Modern Languages, have written some articles for weekly papers

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and magazines. . . ." She was about to produce cuttings from a long envelope when Sir Benjamin stopped her with a brief:

"No time!"

". . . Have moved in good circles, and can get an *entrée* almost anywhere. We've lost our money, and so——"

"Why don't you marry?" interrupted Sir Benjamin, who had no scruples about prying into other people's affairs.

"Because marrying men expect a woman to be their wife, lover and mother all in one, and at present I don't feel capable of filling more than one post at once."

"What can you do for us?"

Peggy took breath and plunged boldly. "Out of twelve pages in the *Daily Truth*, eleven are written by men for modern men, and one is written by women for back numbers. I could give you what modern women want."

"One moment! You're not an emissary for some league or other?"

"No!" laughed Peggy. "I shan't be hatching plots under the *ægis* of Budgen House. I want to earn a wholesome living for myself and my mother—that's all."

"Make a signed statement on that, and I'll give you a trial."

Pushing paper and pen towards her, he turned to the inter-house 'phone.

"Scanlon, I'm sending you a young lady who think's we're behind the times. We're open to conviction, aren't we? Try her out 'on space.'"

Peggy finished her signing and handed the paper to Sir Benjamin.

"Right," said he. "Now go and make good."

II.

Peggy had sufficient common-sense to ask no further questions. She learnt from a messenger boy that Mr. Scanlon was the news editor, and was duly conducted to his room, of which the dominant note was a slaughter-house litter of newspapers, a waste-paper basket over-flowing on to the floor, and a couple of 'phones which seemed to be eternally wailing for attention.

Scanlon was a weary, sparsely-haired man who thought in headlines and hated women.

"Sir Benjamin sent me here. My name is Peggy Locke," smiled the visitor.

Scanlon scowled unamiably. "Don't expect to be treated any different from a man," he snapped.

"If I get a man's salary, of course I am willing to be treated as a man," returned Peggy. "If I got less, I should expect you to rise, offer me a chair, and say, 'What delightful weather we're having.'"

"Can you use a camera?"

"Yes. I used to be keen on it at college."

"Go upstairs and get one of ours."

Again Peggy refrained from asking questions. She made her way upstairs to the art department, where young men with green shades over their eyes juggled with photographic prints and worked them into suitable backgrounds of pen-and-ink drawings. The head of the studio supplied her with a tiny snap-shot camera of perfect workmanship and a flash-light apparatus, and explained the mechanism to her with enthusiasm.

"What a splendid little camera!" exclaimed Peggy, and beamed on him so radiantly that he fell in love with her on the spot. It was a habit she cultivated.

Then back she went to the news room.

Scanlon glanced up, sheared out a cutting from a newspaper and handed it to her. It read: "The Grand Duke of Saxe-Lohenhohe has arrived in England, and is staying at Hampton Lodge, the residence of the Duchess of Banff."

"He's going to marry Lady Mary, the second daughter," said Scanlon.

"Yes, I've heard the rumour."

"Well," pursued Scanlon, with professional relish, "I want the full story of the love-making. What he says to her, what she says to him, and a real good photo of the Grand Ducal hug."

A spot of bright colour flushed in each of Peggy's cheeks. "You ask me to spy on them!" she protested.

"Why not? There's good copy in it."

"I understood from Sir Benjamin that I should be asked to do modern newspaper work."

"Well, here it is. Before you try to bring us up to to-morrow, you've got to show that you yourself are up to to-day."

Peggy realised that she was being tested by a man who didn't want her in his office. If she refused the assignment, it was "get out."

"If you want a man's pay," pursued Scanlon, "you must do a man's work and obey orders. We get heaps of women who want to write articles on how to run the Empire. Are you one of them?"

Peggy pocketed her pride. "Very well, I'll try."

"You're 'on space,' you know."

"I don't quite grasp the meaning of that."

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"Paid by the space you fill. No results, no pay."

"But my expenses?"

Scanlon scribbled a note. "Hand this to the cashier, and don't turn up until you have the story and the photo."

III.

Peggy's bubbling spirits had suffered a sad flattening as she descended the marble staircase of Budgen House, and passed the scrutiny of the stiff commissionaire in the entrance-hall, who looked her over suspiciously, as though she might be carrying away portions of the editor concealed about her person.

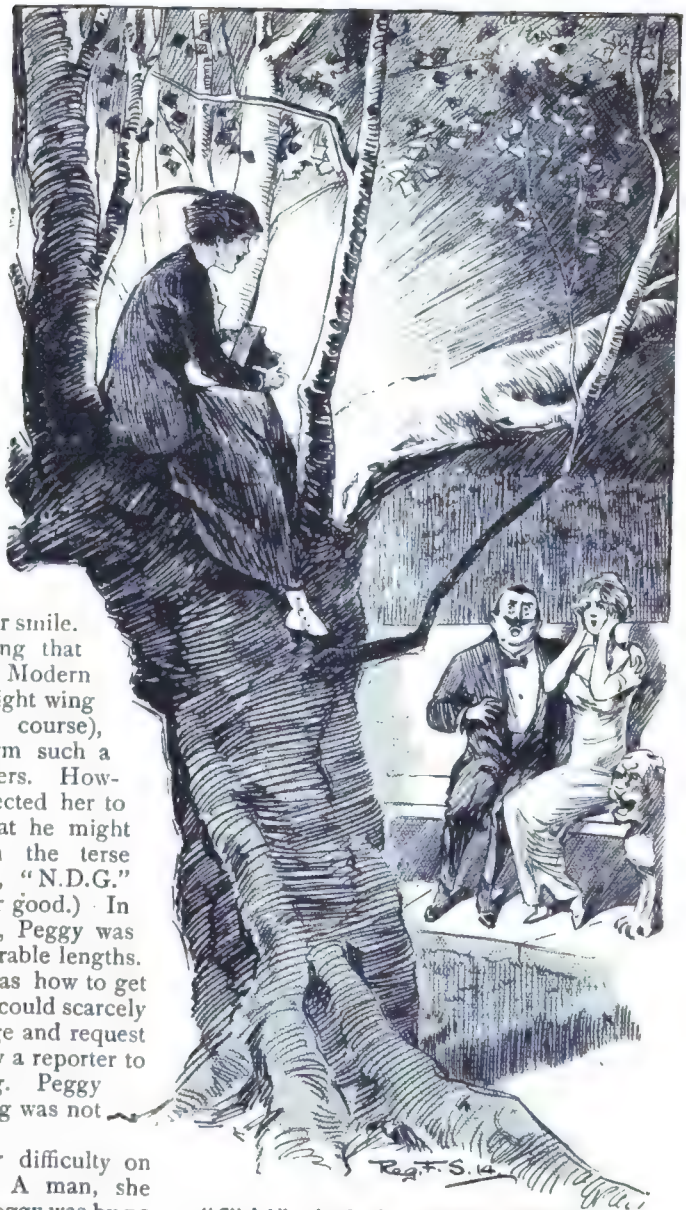
It was humiliating to have found in Scanlon a man who would not thaw at her smile. It was even more humiliating that she, a Girton girl, honours Modern Languages, and the paciest right wing in Cambridge (hockey, of course), should be required to perform such a duty as spying on a pair of lovers. However, Scanlon apparently expected her to fail on the assignment, so that he might report to Sir Benjamin, in the terse language of Budgen House, "N.D.G." (N. standing for no, and G. for good.) In order to score over Scanlon, Peggy was prepared to go to very considerable lengths.

The immediate problem was how to get within range of her game. One could scarcely ring the bell at Hampton Lodge and request Lady Mary Macbayne to allow a reporter to be present at her love-making. Peggy realised that that kind of thing was not being done this year.

Illogically, she blamed her difficulty on the fact of being a woman. A man, she reflected with some acidity—Peggy was by no means all sugar and spice—could have disguised himself as a plumber, or a gardener, or a telephone-repairer, or whatever men-reporters do disguise themselves as, and so penetrated with ease into the sanctities of Hampton Lodge. She, being a woman, would be suspected of evil intentions. It was an unsporting handicap to be a female.

The fleeting idea of a male disguise was summarily rejected. Peggy had never been able to tolerate a novel or a play where a girl was supposed to pass off successfully as a man. The disguise was so obvious as to be an insult to the meanest intelligence.

Peggy, wrestling out the problem, decided that the only practicable plan was to make her way at night into the grounds of Hampton Lodge, conceal herself amongst the thick summer foliage, and trust to luck for the



"Click!" piped the opened time-shutter. "Pluff!" sneezed the flashlight. "*Million-endonnerwetter!*" exploded the Grand Duke, jumping up as one stung by a hornet.

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attainment of her "interview." Arming herself with her camera and a packet of sandwiches, she set off by a midnight suburban train for the neighbourhood of Hampton Lodge.

This semi-palace, lent by the Crown to the widowed Duchess of Banff and her family, is an enclave in a public park. From the outside, the impression of the estate is a tangle of trees and high rhododendrons, belted in so tightly by a palisaded fence that it looks as though it might at any moment burst through, and run riot over the sweeping open spaces of the public domain. The residence itself is curtained by the trees from the gaze of the common herd, who may, within legal hours, picnic under the shadow of the estate and make friends with the very tame deer of the park.

At midnight the domain was, of course, closed. Peggy marauded along the outer stone wall until an overhanging bough whispered: "I'll help you over." On the inside, half-a-mile away, across a sweep of open parkland, the black silhouette of Hampton Lodge estate made a charcoal sketch against a brown-paper sky, waiting for the moon to rise and translate the scene to a silver print.

Peggy mapped out a *détour* which kept her under the shadows of oaks and elms until she was at the palisade of Hampton Lodge. The fence itself offered no difficulties to a Girton girl. She glided in amongst the sombre rhododendrons and presently reached a gently-curving sheet of shallow water, embroidered with sleeping water-lilies. This she skirted until a rustic bridge allowed her passage across. And so she came towards the residence itself.

It was the garden of the Sleeping Beauty. Scarcely a twig stirred. The palace slept in tranquil security, oblivious of the designs of a Yellow Press. No watchman challenged Peggy as she padded, pussy-footed, about the grounds. Thus she was able to pick out a vantage-point at her leisure.

Under a spreading oak was a Marcus Stone seat awaiting lovers' confidences, close to the residence but screened from it by a stately hedge of closely-trimmed box. Peggy judged that this might be a likely resort of the Grand Duke and Lady Mary. Climbing high into the branches of a neighbouring tree, she prepared for a long, even a martyr-like vigil.

It was grossly, penitentially uncomfortable. One could not doze without fear of tumbling off. But what was discomfort compared with the eventual pleasure of scoring over Scanlon?

About a month later, so it seemed, the sluggard dawn crept from its eastern bed, misty, but giving promise of a blazing, cloudless summer day. After another month, it was drowsy afternoon. From the lawns behind the box hedge came the ping-pong of tennis balls. Peggy snapped a few films at the empty scene in general.

Afternoon lazed on into evening, and the lights of the house told of dinner. Peggy's sandwiches had long ago vanished, and she would have given her hand in marriage to any man who might have offered her a tall lemonade and ice-cream.

Would the lovers *never* appear?

Oh, joy, steps at last! Through an opening in the hedge, guarded by stately peacocks in clipped box, a man and a woman in evening dress appeared. That fat little tub of a man was undoubtedly His Serene Highness the Grand Duke of Saxe-Lohenhohe. That tall, meek-looking girl was unquestionably Lady Mary Macbayne.

"Poor thing!" thought Peggy, though it was approaching *lèse-majesté* to think thus of a lady of the blood royal about to marry on to a grand ducal throne.

The pair of lovers approached. Peggy strained her ears to catch their words of endearment.

"The *salmi* was good," were the first words she registered. The, came appreciatively from the Grand Duke.

"Yes, Otto."

"I am engaging a *chef* from Ciro's. He will cost me twenty thousand marks a year, but what does that matter? One must have the best."

"Yes, Otto."

"Call me *liebschen!*"

Peggy got her camera and flashlight ready.

"*Liebschen*," repeated the meek Lady Mary without enthusiasm. Then: "Shall we sit down?"

"Where?"

Lady Mary indicated the seat.

"But it is stone. I—you will get rheumatism."

"I don't think so."

"We will risk it!" said the Grand Duke gallantly, and sat down. A long silence ensued.

An earwig or something or other in the creepy line began to mount Peggy's stocking. She wriggled to shake it off, without success. She felt inclined to scream out: "Kiss her and have done with it!"

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"The stars are very bright," discovered the Grand Duke poetically.

("Hang this beastly insect!" squirmed Peggy.)

"But not so bright as your eyes."

("For heaven's sake, hurry up!")

"My floweret!" rhapsodised His Serene Highness. "My little cornflower! We shall be very happy. My *chef—ach*, I have already told you that."

("If he won't kiss you, kiss *him!*")

The Grand Duke bent (or, to be accurate, raised himself) towards the passive Lady Mary. His arm encircled her shoulders. His lips sought hers . . .

"Click!" piped the opened time-shutter. "Pluff!" sneezed the flash-light.

"*Millionendonnerwetter!*" exploded the Grand Duke, jumping up as one stung by a hornet.

Outside, on the public road of the park, a young man and a girl in a two-seater cycle-car were enjoying a summer's evening run. "Save me!" cried Peggy.

Peggy was streaking down her tree like a fireman down his shiny pole into the engine-shed.

"Give me that camera!" thundered the Grand Duke, making after her as fast as his twinkly legs would allow.

Peggy rabbited through the thick darkness of the rhododendrons in the general direction of the palisade. The paciest right wing of her day would have won the race easily had she not forgotten that sheet of water where the water-lilies were shutting their sleepy eyes for the night. As she pulled up short on the very brink His Serene Highness panted upon her. To the far right, in the direction of the rustic bridge, there was a sound of some other pursuer.

It was no moment for vacillation. Tucking up her skirts (or, to be exact, her one skirt) Peggy splashed boldly through the shallow water to the side of safety.

"She will escape!" cried the Grand Duke, and, with royal resolution, plunged in after her.

He found a hole, and plopped down amongst the surprised water-lilies.

Peggy could not resist the temptation. "Click!" piped the time-shutter. "Pluff!" sneezed the flashlight. And then she was off to the palisade and over.

Outside, on the public road of the park, a young man and a girl in a two-seater cycle-car were enjoying a summer's evening run.

"Save me!" cried Peggy.

"What's the matter?" asked the occupants of the car simultaneously.

"He's after me, and he's mad!" explained Peggy with a tinge of truth.

The gallant young man took the dripping Peggy on to his side of the car, regardless of the mud, and speeded away for London town.

IV.

Peggy delivered her camera and its precious contents to the art department, and went downstairs to Scanlon in a deceptively diffident mood

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"I've had a very trying day," she remarked. "What with roosting in a tree for eighteen hours, and nothing to eat or drink, and being chased like a burglar——"

"Did you get the photo?" snapped Scanlon.

"It may not develop well. I had to take it by flashlight, and——"

"Write a half-column," ordered Scanlon without perceptible gratitude, and flicked out a finger in the direction of a vacant desk.

Presently there came a plop in the pneumatic tube. The art department had sent down the roll of developed films. Scanlon held it up to the light, while Peggy, endeavouring to throttle her eagerness, looked over his shoulder.

"Which ones?" asked Scanlon.

"The last two," directed Peggy.

"That's fair for the Grand Ducal hug," he admitted grudgingly, "but what on earth does this one represent?"

"His Highness sitting in a pond plucking water-lilies for Lady Mary," she answered with sober gravity.

"Did you fake that film?" he asked in suspicion.

"No, I persuaded him to pose for me."

Her eyes met his steadily.

"Do you approve?"

"We can use it."

"Thanks."

"Now the story."

She finished it rapidly and handed the sheets to him. His blue pencil was poised to slash the amateur effort to ribbons, but he found little to destroy. Adding an "O. K.," he tossed it into the sub-editors' basket.

"It will pass," he admitted.

"Tell me candidly," said Peggy, "why do you object to women journalists?"

"There is no sex in journalism," was the sharp reply, "only brains and muscle."

"And tact?" she thrust.

"If a reporter hasn't tact, he might as well settle down as a proof-reader."

"Is it equally necessary for the higher editorial posts?"

"This chair is not as comfortable as it looks," he parried, and passed his hand over his scanty hair, worn away in the strenuous service of Budgen House.

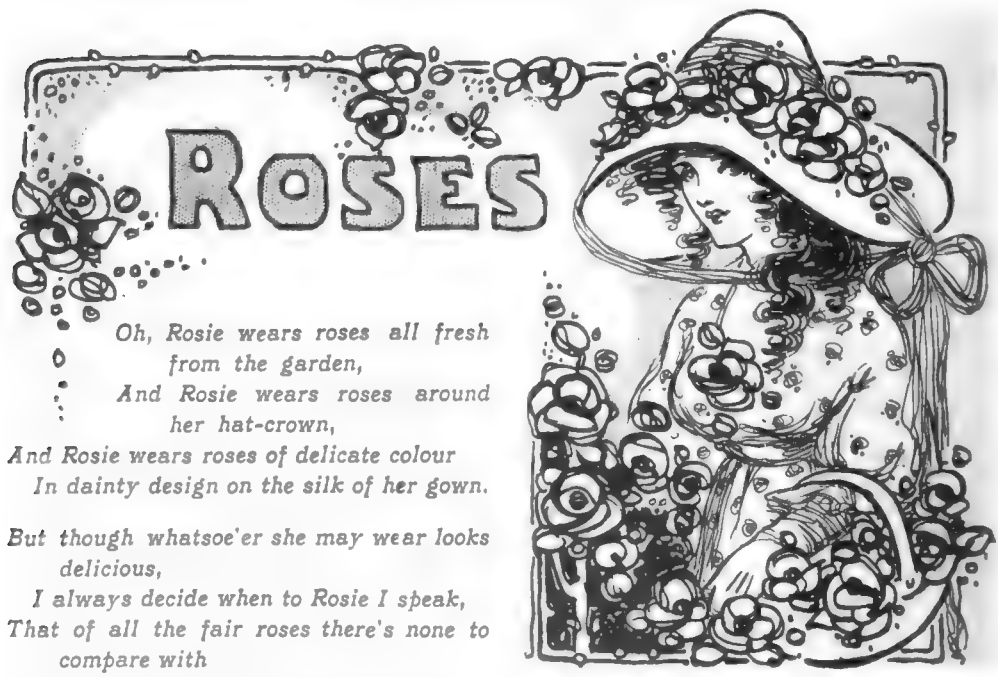
Peggy suddenly felt sympathy for him.

"I'll embroider you a cushion," said she.

The offer brought a first smile from Scanlon.

"Can you?" he asked. "I thought you were a Girton girl."

"Try me on that for my next assignment," she retorted gaily.



Oh, Rosie wears roses all fresh from the garden,
And Rosie wears roses around her hat-crown,
And Rosie wears roses of delicate colour
In dainty design on the silk of her gown.

But though whatsoe'er she may wear looks delicious,
I always decide when to Rosie I speak,
That of all the fair roses there's none to compare with
The roses on Rosie's adorable cheek!

Eileen Price Evans.

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

Photo, Topical Press.

A famous American motorist driving his car along the enormous aqueduct which carries water from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to supply Los Angeles, California.

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting or Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

A CURIOUS CAR TRACK.

Mr. Bert Dingley, a famous racing motorist of the United States, recently varied his rides by motoring along a section of a great pipe-line of the largest aqueduct in the world. This is designed to carry a daily supply of 238,000,000 gallons from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the San Fernando Valley, 25 miles from Los Angeles, California, a distance of 235 miles.

A PONY AT TIFFIN.

A very intelligent pony is Natty, who is a native of Burma, and was bought at the age of five by a gentleman who gave him to his son.

The two became fast friends, and as soon as Natty heard the gong go for his master's tiffin he would rush up to the window and neigh, hoping to be allowed to share the meal.

Photo *D. Solomon.*

An intelligent pony who hails from Burma, and shares his master's tiffin whenever he gets the chance.

By courtesy of Popular Mechanics Magazine.

In Porto Rico the air is so balmy that air plants are often seen growing on the telephone and telegraph wires.

OVERHEAD PLANTS.

In Porto Rico the air is so moist and balmy that plants often grow on the telegraph and telephone wires. The insulation rots in places, and so the plants take root.

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AN OPTICAL ILLUSION.

EVEN the camera is not infallible when objects are photographed from an unusual standpoint, and this photograph of the Forth Bridge provides a curious optical illusion.

The two booms, seen diverging towards the top of the picture, in reality converge, and viewed by the eye this is plainly apparent. As recorded by the camera, however, the convergence of the booms is negatived by the fact that the portion at the top of the photograph is so much nearer the camera than the points where the booms rest on the stone piers. This only shows how misleading a photograph may be!

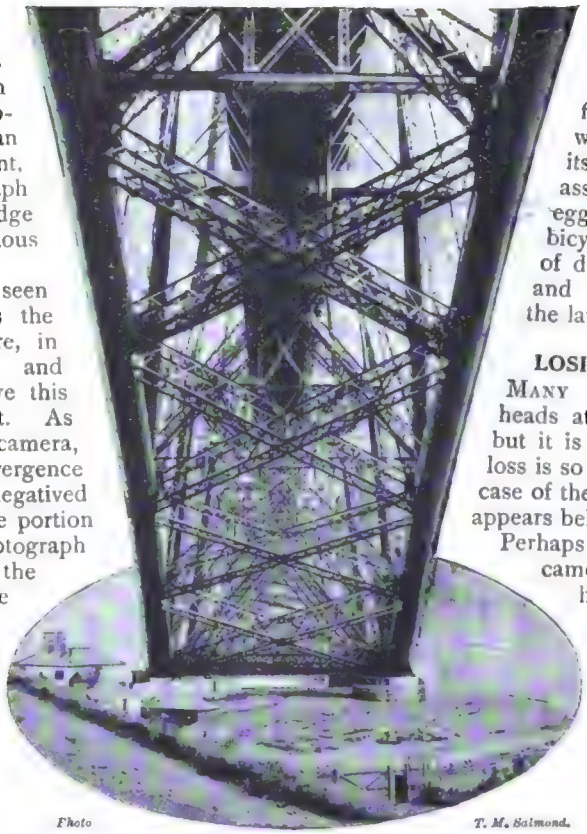

Photo *T. M. Salmond.*

A photograph of the Forth Bridge taken from an unusual standpoint, with the result that the converging booms appear to diverge.

NOT AN EASTER EGG.

AT first sight the egg-shaped object perched on the wheel of the bicycle might strike one as the product of an enterprising hen with a taste for balancing feats. Really it is nothing more or less than the result of a worn outer cover and a bulging inner tube.

The bicycle in question belonged to a child, and the outer cover had seen its best days. The inner tube, finding an unusually weak spot, forced itself through and assumed this curious egg-like shape. The bicycle was carried out of doors just as it was, and photographed on the lawn.

LOSING HIS HEAD.

MANY people lose their heads at critical moments, but it is not often that the loss is so complete as in the case of the dog whose picture appears below.

Perhaps he objected to the camera and turned away his head as a mute protest; at any rate, quite unwittingly he chose the exact moment of exposure, with the result that he came out in the photograph minus his head.

Dogs are not the only fidgety sitters, and the picture may perhaps serve as a warning to those who are inclined to be restive when posed before the camera. Certainly, having submitted to the ordeal, it would be heartrending to find oneself depicted without the proper complement of limbs.

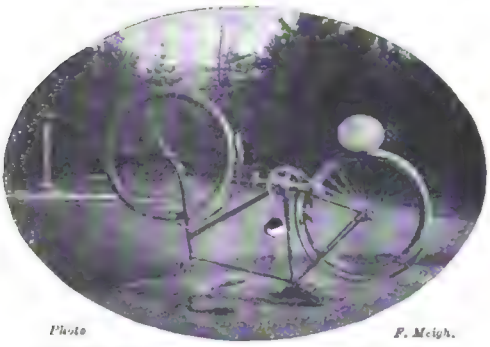

Photo *F. Meigh.*

The curious result of a worn outer cover and an inner tube which forced its way through into the shape of an egg.

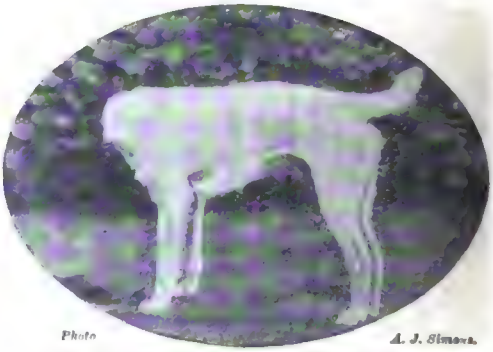

Photo *A. J. Simons.*

This dog is apparently headless, due to the fact that he turned away at the moment when the plate was exposed.

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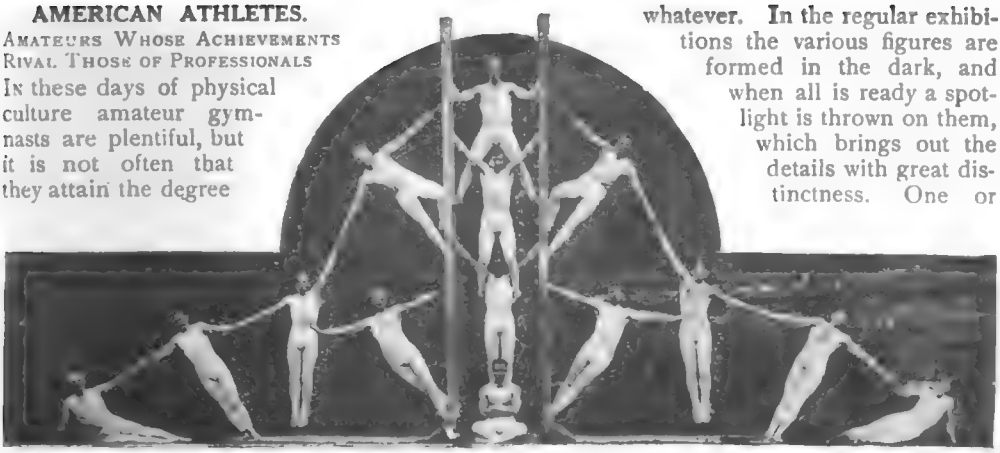
AMERICAN ATHLETES.

AMATEURS WHOSE ACHIEVEMENTS RIVAL THOSE OF PROFESSIONALS

In these days of physical culture amateur gymnasts are plentiful, but it is not often that they attain the degree of perfection acquired by members of the Young Men's Christian Association at Bloomington, Illinois, U.S.A. Many of their feats require a skill and endurance seldom shown save by professional athletes.

At the gymnastic exhibition held last year their work compared most favourably with that of professionals, as may be seen from the reproductions of photographs taken on that occasion.

All the men who take part in the work are regular gymnasium members, who are engaged at various occupations in the city. The training has, of course, to be done in their spare time, and is entirely voluntary, none of the men receiving any payment whatever. In the regular exhibitions the various figures are formed in the dark, and when all is ready a spotlight is thrown on them, which brings out the details with great distinctness. One or two formations are, however, made in the light, in order that the audience may see how they are done.

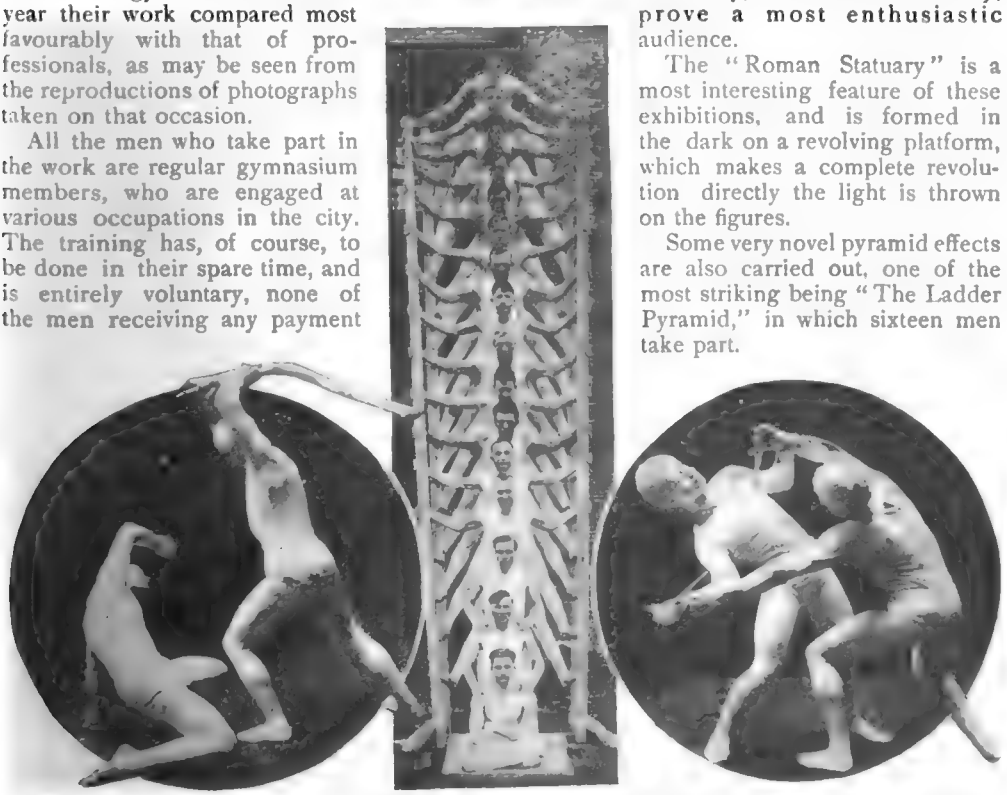


A novel pyramid effect carried out by members of the Y.M.C.A. gymnasium at Bloomington, Illinois. Their performances, although entirely amateur, evince a skill and endurance worthy of professional athletes.

As a dress rehearsal these Y.M.C.A. gymnasts give a performance to the poor children of the city, who, needless to say, prove a most enthusiastic audience.

The "Roman Statuary" is a most interesting feature of these exhibitions, and is formed in the dark on a revolving platform, which makes a complete revolution directly the light is thrown on the figures.

Some very novel pyramid effects are also carried out, one of the most striking being "The Ladder Pyramid," in which sixteen men take part.



"Roman Statuary" is invariably a popular feature of the performances, and the groups are shown on a revolving platform. "The Ladder Pyramid" is another item always sure of a warm reception.

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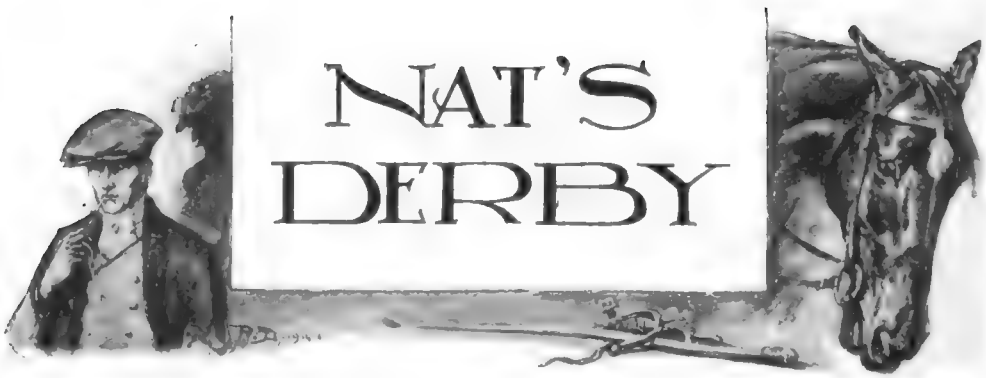

How He Came Out with Flying Colours.

By Dorothea Conyers.

I.

"Ever counted the days up to something, Derek? Ever dreaded the coming of a date, and yet longed to have it over?"

Dick Langton leant across a table at the Carlton. There was little reason to infer that ruin lurked by it, with its *débris* of dessert, and coffee and liqueurs just being put on it.

"But, my dear chap!"—Derek Yorke lighted a cigarette—"Blue Bird will win the Derby, and everything will be all right."

"Blue Bird can win, if he is ridden properly. Halsey can do it, and Halsey may or may not be fit after his accident. . . . will not, I fear. You know how the horse lost at Newmarket after his easy win at Liverpool with Halsey up. He was sailing along when Grey Cloud came with a rush. Halsey was ill, and Jones rode. Directly Jones asked the question the horse curled up, shut down, died away. Halsey is, as you know, still half unconscious. We can't ask him anything. The horse swings along at home like the good thing he is, with Little Nat, his boy, up. We tried him last week, and he did more than we expected."

"But even a Derby lost is not a national calamity," Yorke answered.

"No, but this Derby is the sun round which my life revolves just now. I made a mad bet ten years ago—champagne, folly, conceit helping me to do it. We owned Marcovitch then, with Sansy coming on. I was a crude youth flaring up at the idea of our stable losing. Stan Goldenstein——"

"Ah!" said Yorke, quietly.

"It was this sort of thing from him," Langton went on: "'Derbies are not won until the post is past. Marcovitch may be good, but Jonquil is better. Don't you do the cocksure, youngster. Oh, I'll bet, if you like.' And so I laid him twenty to one that we'd win a Derby in the next ten years. It seemed a certainty. I laid it in thousands," added Dick, bitterly. "And its limit is up in a fortnight."

Derek grunted expressively. He knew how ill luck had dogged the Granville stables; how Marcovitch had been bumped and knocked out of the Derby; how Sansy, the crack two-year-old, had turned roarer; how a succession of youngsters bred and bought had turned out quite useless. The Langtons came of a generation of gamblers; the old man died leaving his affairs in a muddle, and his son had risked so much to get straight that a once flourishing estate was now dipped and involved and mortgaged.

Then luck fluttered her wings. Blue Bird, beginning moderately, showed his mettle towards the end of his two-year-old career, until people began to talk of the dark chestnut as something good for next year's Derby. He had wintered splendidly, and grown into a slashing colt, with size and substance. Granville looked up again after its years of gloom.

"My old Uncle Dick has offered to help to square me if I win this Derby, and there's Eve in the case—your sister, Derek. Your father won't take me as a son-in-law, penniless and done for, even if I had the face to offer myself. If Blue Bird wins I shall be able to clear off most of the mortgages and get square with the world, and if he loses there

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are twenty thousand pounds laid in a moment's madness to be found, and only the sale of Granville Park left to do it."

"There's Goldenstein over there watching us. He's no white man, Dick, and he's devoted to my sister Eve."

Dick frowned.

"Also I heard privately," said Yorke—"things leak out—that he has backed Grey Cloud for about as much as any man cares to lose, and as far as we know, with Blue Bird out of the way, Grey Cloud would be a moral certainty. The three-year-olds were very moderate last year."

Stan Goldenstein watched the two young fellows go for their coats. His sallow face creased to a faint smile as he, too, got up to leave.

He had made the bet as a speculation, backing his knowledge of the Turf's uncertainty. But an old feud lay between the men. Goldenstein remembered a cutting speech once made by old General Langton to his father; there were social snubs to be wiped away, and now there existed a still stronger motive. Goldenstein had lost his heart to Lady Eve Yorke, not discreetly, but with violence—love intensified by the knowledge of the position she could give him. The Yorkes were poor, and the old man wanted money badly.

Mr. Goldenstein went for his coat, and smiled more sweetly still.

"He's got some card up his sleeve," said Yorke sharply. "Look at the bounder grinning at us."

"That," replied Langton, "is why I am afraid of the 6th of June. I've got a feeling that the fellow has some pull over me. He's got it in that look down his nose."

II.

If Dick Langton could have overheard a conversation between Goldenstein and the boy who looked after Blue Bird, which took place next day, he would have turned surmise into certainty.

Goldenstein had a small place near Granville, a cottage which he had changed by degrees into a nest of luxury. He had taken it to be near Yorke Manor. The motor-houses were larger than the combined sitting-rooms, and the glass-houses larger than the cottage, but Stanley Goldenstein liked to refer to the place modestly as "my little cabin."

He could, therefore, motor past Granville without exciting comment, and when he pulled up at a small spinney half-a-mile from the gate leading to the stables, it was quite natural for him to stop to speak to one of the boys from the racing stable.

"Well, Nat?"

"Well, sir?" The boy looked sullen, but submissive and frightened.

"They'll give you the mount, Nat. Now that Halsey is laid up, no one else knows the horse's temper. You'll ride."

"I could win easy!"

Longing and pride burst out through the words.

"Why not back us, sir? I could win."

"But you won't. There's a big career in front of you, Nat, to be blasted by a word from me. Eh, my son?"

The boy reddened sullenly. Before he came to Granville he had slipped, stolen, and Goldenstein knew it. Worse, he held a letter in Nat's handwriting which would have prevented any stable keeping him. The letter was to a bookmaker, since dead, and how Goldenstein had got hold of it Goldenstein alone knew.

"It comes to this."

The sallow little man leant forward across his steering-wheel and spoke clearly.

"If you show Blue Bird the whip he curls up. If you sit still on him, and only use your hands, he'll give you the last ounce in his body. He'll do splendidly before the race; you'll ride him in his trial, and I can help to persuade Anstey to give you the mount. He dines with me to-night. And . . . you'll take up your whip and use it—that's all. No one will blame you; no one can know. Don't you dare to cross me, Nat! But if you do, I'll see to you afterwards. You may trust me for that."

Nat looked up at the shifty face, and felt he did not trust Mr. Goldenstein for anything, but he nodded with the same sullen, beaten expression.

The big car throbbed into life, gliding up the narrow road; the boy turned back into the wood, gritting his teeth.

It was time for evening stables. He found Blue Bird's owner and the trainer at the horse's box, and with them Eve Yorke and her brother.

A Derby favourite is hedged round by as many precautions and formalities as royalty. A boy watched the stable; Nat himself slept over it; the horse's oats and bran were looked over as though Borgia lurked in the bins.

A big, lazy-looking colt, Blue Bird turned to blink at his visitors. He was a slashing horse, a little short in front, but with a greyhound's length in his thighs. Blue Bird was

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not a horse to catch the eye, but one to look at again and again, and see the great points in him. His depth through the heart promised staying power; he had great bone, but his eye gave hint of hidden temper.

"He lost the Two Thousand, but I think he'll make up for it with the Derby, the Gold Vase, and the Leger."

Anstey, the trainer, spoke with enthusiasm.

"We gave him a gallop yesterday, and he went like a smasher. Yes, I think——"

Owner and trainer whispered together. Nat was busy with the horse.

Lady Eve, assured of Blue Bird's gentleness, came into the box.

"Yes, he's as quiet as a lamb, my lady; follows me round every day looking for a bit of sugar I take for him, and an apple if I can get one. It's all the way you treat them."

The boy's eyes were full of pride as he laid his hand on the horse's neck, and felt the silky skin rippling over the muscles. He might get the mount, feel the colt stride out under him on the wide Epsom course, feel the joy of taking his darling through his paces, of wearing the others down with the great tireless stride.

And he was to *lose* with him, to keep his secret, and to see the favourite disgraced.

"We'll put up Martin then in the trial to-morrow, but really I believe Nat would do the horse more justice. He seems to go more kindly for him than anyone."

Nat heard with a flash of something like hope. He might not ride, after all. But if he did not, he knew that there would be some trickery of a worse description—that Blue Bird's losing would be made a certainty.

"If you ride"—the tall girl let the colt sniff at her bared hand—"do your best, Nat. There's so much—so much depending on this race."

So much. . . .

The keeping of the old stone house standing behind the rose gardens. Dick Langton loved every stone in it, loved the rambling grounds, the old gardens, the brawling, busy little river tearing into the lake. To sell or let his old home would break his heart.

"If you ever want to leave it, Dick, I'm your man," Goldenstein had told him. "With a little outlay it would suit me very well. I'd take over everything."

Dick left the stables to tear his heart with thoughts of how the old servants, whose fathers had worked there, and whose sons were coming on to take their places, would be dismissed, how money would transform and disfigure the whole place—and yet, unless he won the Derby, it must go.

They sat in the library with a fire burning, for the May evenings were chilly, talking of nothing but the horse and the race.

III.

Blue Bird, stripped for his trial the next day, looked just right—a little big still, just enough left on to go off in the last fortnight's work. They had good trial stuff in Fayland, who was to wait for them and stretch the Derby candidate for the last mile. Fayland could never last any further.

Martin found Blue Bird a little sluggish, a slow beginner, but striding on resolutely with magnificent freedom once he got warm. Fayland's terrific speed made the jockey shake his horse up. They closed, and Martin took up his whip to get his horse really going.

"He doesn't stay."

The jockey dropped off when they had finished, with the sprinter five lengths ahead.

"He gave out there at the distance."

Nat opened his mouth, and then turned red; he knew that he *must* not speak.

Anstey compressed his lips. A week ago, with Nat riding, Blue Bird had beaten Fayland easily, and he could not believe the difference of weight which he had arranged to-day could account for the failure.

"It comes to this, sir. Nat must ride the horse now Halsey is still laid up. Some 'osses *won't* have strangers at them."

Dick Langton took a great deal of comforting, administered principally in a boat on the lake during the day. The trainer poohpoohed the idea of the running having been right, but Dick was too anxious to believe it.

It took a new trial a few days later to convince him, and then, with little Nat up, the chestnut mowed down Fayland as the scythe sweeps ripe grass, easily, stride by stride, until the watchers felt the Derby was a certainty.

Someone else, watching with powerful glasses, shrugged shoulders as the horses pulled up.

"Grey Cloud would never see the way he is going," Goldenstein muttered. "That brute's a second Ormonde."

Going back to his motor he looked uneasily at a small betting book. He had backed Grey Cloud heavily, and, besides that, Mr. Moss Levi, who Society would have been shocked to discover was really Stan Goldenstein, had laid against the favourite

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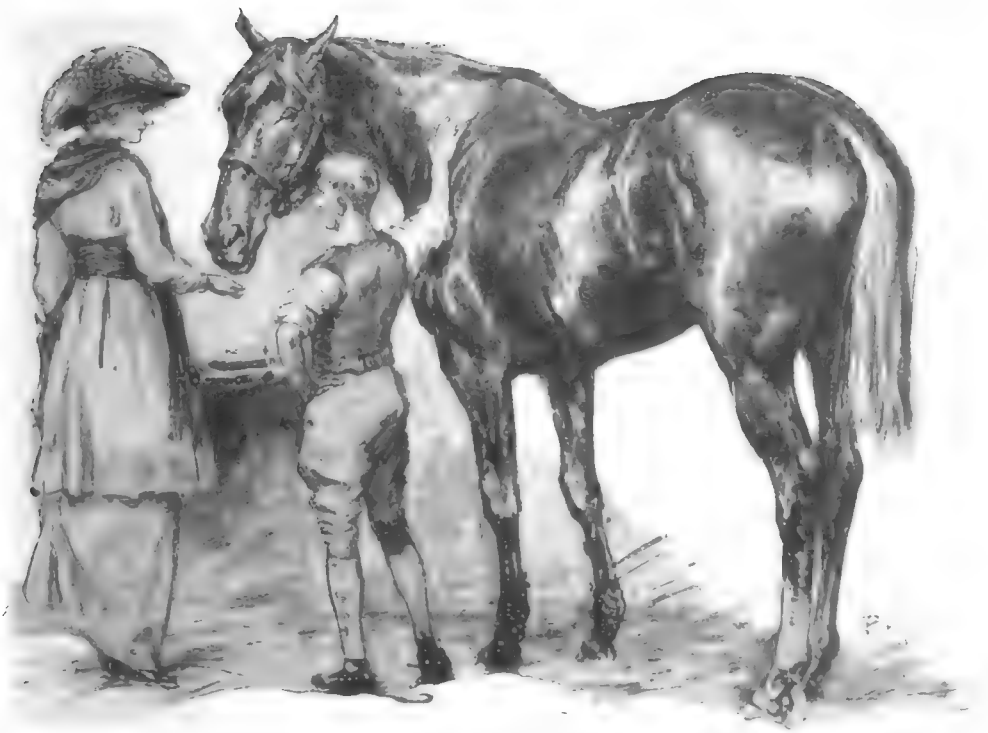

"If you ride"—the tall girl let the colt sniff at her bared hand—"do your best, Nat. There's so much—so much depending on this race."

more heavily than was wise. A man who holds four aces can afford to bluff, but the figures, read critically, were a little terrifying.

Men bluff sometimes with the cards called money. A series of misfortunes had left Goldenstein very anxious to make something big. He hovered on the verge of catastrophe, and knew it.

"There's absolutely no fear," he said to himself later on, as he laid freely against the favourite. "The brute can't win."

About the same time, three young people discussed the certainty of the other outlook, and forgot that there is trouble in the world.

One of them remembered it again that evening when Lord Yerville called his daughter.

"Remember, Eve, there must be no understanding with Langton until this Derby is over. You know how poor I am, and I won't see you a pauper's wife. Goldenstein will set me straight the day he marries you. What? You dislike Mr. Goldenstein. My dear, you would scarcely notice him in a year or two. I've Langton's promise to clear off if his luck does not turn."

Eve went to bed and cried bitterly.

IV.

When Blue Bird came in through the gate into the big paddock at Epsom, the crowd who ran to look at him knew that the Blue Riband of the Turf depended on his effort but they did not know that the making and marring of several lives was also involved.

The favourite walked calmly, making friends as he showed himself off. Grey Cloud sweated profusely, but a clever contingent pinned their faith on him, and talked of his terrific turn of speed and his power of coming down hill. Noyeau, the French crack, was a magnificent horse and the foreigners knew him to be especially good.

Nat had the mount. He was out in the cream and purple jacket and gold cap, out to ride for England's greatest race, with her best jockeys against him.

He saw Goldenstein once, received a quiet, meaning nod, and no more. He knew his instructions. He was to lose the race.

He crouched on the little saddle, with his heart like lead. The horse was so fit, walking so springily, bending his lean head to the hand he knew; the subtle sympathy which

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comes between horse and rider made Nat's heart ache.

The big chestnut would do his best if he was ridden as Nat knew how to ride him, and yet his strange temper was to be roused by the whip.

Blue Bird moved lazily in the Parade. The sight of the packed stands, the masses of people, the crowded lines on the rails, stretching till they were a mere blur, went to Nat's head. This was the Derby, with half the world, it seemed to the boy, come to look on. The King was there; he had a horse in the race. Nat heard the murmur rise as he passed. Was he not on the favourite, with thousands of golden pounds standing to his name?

There was little delay at the post. Dick Langton had not entered the owners' stand. He felt he must watch the race from the Yervilles' box, where Eve was. Goldenstein found them there, his face calmly cheerful. He had ten pounds, he said, on Blue Bird.

"He *has* something up his sleeve," thought Langton to himself.

They were off. Silver King swept to the front, making the running for Grey Cloud. Blue Bird began slowly; Nat lost place, and found himself behind. Then the big chestnut warmed up, with great untiring stride, and flung along, going generously, easily, within himself.

Silver King dropped back. Grey Cloud was out now. The flutter of silks, the rush of the air, the thunder of the hoofs, confused Nat as wine might. Then his brain cleared; hands down, he saw an opening, forgot his orders to get shut in, and shot round Tattenham Corner with a clear lead, and the glory of it almost maddening him.

Horses were tiring now as they flashed down the hill in a serried mass, the blues at either side; the waving atoms in the motors and carriages voiced Blue Bird's name.

"The favourite wins! Blue Bird! Blue Bird!"

A sickening throb of memory jarred Nat. He saw the clear green course, felt that Blue Bird was fresh and not really extended, and then almost with a sob he dropped his hands.

Flush to his side raced the French horse; full of running Grey Cloud closed in on the rails.

Nat was swimming in chaos; mechanically he sat forward and pressed his knees in, picked up his mount, and felt with a thrill of ecstasy the colt respond. Let them race; the chestnut head was out again; the great stride ate the wide streak of green, with its border of blue policemen dotting a ribbon of humanity.

The stands came now, swaying, roaring. Still Noyeau raced on, and Grey Cloud's white nose was at Blue Bird's hot shoulder.

Nat knew that he must move on the horse, take up his whip. Who could blame him? A lifetime was crowded in a few surging seconds. Nat's right hand gripped his whip . . .

And Lady Eve had asked him to do his best for her.

Goldenstein, white as a sheet, felt the colour rush back to his face.

"You'll win, Dick!" he cried, now that his heart felt quite at ease.

The whip was lifted, the boy's heels were ready. He knew that at the first touch the chestnut would falter and sulk.

Swish-swish. He could hear the whalebone sing at either side of him.

"Keep still! Don't muff it, boy!" a voice wailed high above the din.

The whip dropped; the second had brought Grey Cloud's white nose level. And Noyeau was not half a head behind.

"*Don't muff it!*"

He knew so well how to win, and he *must* muff it.

The roar of the multitude, the thunder behind him was all the boy remembered. He could win the Derby, he, Nat, be the hero of the day, and let the rest come and go . . .

He would *not* wrong Blue Bird.

The old familiar pressure, the niggle on the bit the horse knew. He had never shown his mettle. Out now he shot at the call, spurning those two strugglers, out as one last wondrous roar split the skies.

There came the flash of the box, and then the pulling up with every nerve tingling with the joy of it, and half the world gone crazy with delight.

"Well done, Nat! Well done!"

They reached the gate; Dick Langton's hand was on the bridle—a Dick with trouble wiped from his face.

"But, Nat, why didn't you come sooner? The horse was going twice as fast as the others when you rode him out. You rode it fine, Nat, for a beginner!"

"Yes, sir—but I won the Derby, so I did, sir."

Nat seemed half dazed.

He weighed out all right. The triumph was over, and the reckoning to come.

As the boy stood, exhausted from excitement, he saw Goldenstein crossing towards

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He would *not* wrong Blue Bird. . . . He had never shown his mettle. Out now he shot at the call, spurning those two stragglers, out as one last wondrous roar split the skies.

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him, waiting for a minute to speak to a friend.

Nat turned to the proud owner of the Derby winner. He would speak before others spoke for him.

"Mr. Langton, sir—wait one minute."

Stammering, eager, young Nat poured out his story, all but one thing; he would not tell his tempter's name.

"I can't give it away, sir; there's honour even in devilment. I'm done for now, and I knows, but I couldn't fail the Bird when he had it in him—I couldn't, even if I never sees him again. Now you can tell any decent jockey how to ride the horse, an' what his crab is."

"Even knowing you were throwing away your chance of success in life?"

"I couldn't wrong him, sir, at the end, and her ladyship, too—she asked me . . ."

Langton whistled sibilantly. He had suffered enough himself to realise what Nat felt. Then his hand fell on the boy's shoulder, gripping it tightly.

"The man who won't fail Blue Bird rides him again in every race he starts for," said Langton quietly. "That's all, Nat. The past is a dead thing; the future is a man's own. I see Mr. Goldenstein wishes to speak to you. I'll be back again."

Nat knew then that Langton wanted no names. The boy waited to speak to a man whose anger was the more hideous because it had to be covered decently. Stan Goldenstein's eyes were not pretty, his lips were drawn back a little from his teeth.

"So, my boy," he said smoothly, "I'll see to you, now. There are one or two things your employer may care to know."

"I couldn't 'elp a-winnin' of the Derby, sir," cried Nat, a little piteously. "I could not, when the 'oss was fit for it."

"I'll ruin you for it," said Goldenstein brutally.

Nat hung his head. "An' I've told Mr. Langton all I've done," he burst out, "thieving an' trickery an' all—all but your name, sir."

"You've told him!"

Nat had not seen the safeguard of this telling; the man who came forward to ruin him now would be marked as the man who had tried to have the horse stopped.

Goldenstein's sallow skin paled to colourless yellow: the primeval desire to hurt and kill was upon him.

"Oh, Nat! Lady Eve wishes to see you."

Langton had come back quietly.

"Nat's been doing a confession here, Goldenstein, after his race. I fancy your people knew something of it, but Granville throws her cloak round him now."

"I . . . was merely . . . offering my congratulations to a successful jockey," said Goldenstein, after a perceptible pause.

"An' . . . I've won the Derby—went straight—an' it's all right," whispered Nat, almost hysterically.

If the surging crowd had troubled to look closely, they might have seen that the boy who had ridden the favourite to victory had tears in his eyes as he followed the owner through the crowd.

"BLACK AND WHITE."

They sat together in her boudoir snug,
He dark and graceless, she blue-eyed and fair;
Her arms were round his neck, her cheek 'gainst his;
Upon one chair.

She murmured words of love; his dark moustache,
In contrast, mingled with her tresses gold;
"To steal your love may be a sin," she said,
"But love is bold.

"I want you always with me, Pierre," she cried;
"Though you're another's, yet I love he more;"
She sudden ceased—her husband, early home,
Stood at the door.

To him she ran, and on his shoulder broad,
In mute appeal, she laid her golden head,
While her companion, trapped, said ne'er a word,
But glared instead.

Her husband spoke: "What's this?"
"Oh, John," she wailed,
"I love him; he has been up here before—
I want one for a birthday gift, just like
This poodle from next door."

W. L.

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CAP AND BELLS

JUMPING AT CONCLUSIONS.

A woman had called at the electrician's shop to ask him to send a man up to her house, as the electric bell would not ring. A day passed, and the man did not make his appearance, so she ventured down to the shop again.

"How is it you didn't send a man to mend my bell?" she asked.

"I did send him," replied the employer. "He came back and told me that he rang three times and there was no answer, so he took it for granted that no one was at home."

* *

QUITE A FEAT!

CHILD (to landlord who has called for rent): "My mother's out."

LANDLORD (who can see mother's feet behind the door): "Well, tell her to take her feet with her next time she goes."

* *

DRAWING A CONVEYANCE.

ARTIST: "I've been working like a horse all the morning."

FRIEND: "What have you been doing?"

ARTIST: "Drawing a conveyance."

SUFFICIENT PROVOCATION.

"Ah, yes," murmured Miss Screecher after the first selection at the musical evening, "I have had some exciting experiences. Coming over here from New York a terrible storm arose, and I had to sing to quiet the passengers. You should have seen the heavy seas running."

And the big, rude man in the pink necktie gazed out of the window.

"I don't blame the seas," he muttered.

* * * * *

QUITE A DIFFERENT MATTER.

SUBURBAN RESIDENT: "It's simply fine to wake up in the morning and hear the leaves whispering outside your window."

CITY MAN: "It's all right to hear the leaves whisper, but I never could stand hearing the grass mown!"

* * * * *

A PROHIBITIVE PRICE.

Seth Woodbury was a tight-fisted, hard-hearted old farmer. His brother William dying, Seth drove into town to have a notice about his death inserted in the weekly newspaper.

"There ain't no charges, be there?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh, yes, indeed," answered the editor. "Our price is four shillings an inch."

"Crikey!" muttered the old man, "an' Bill six-foot-two!"

NERVOUS OLD GENT: "Conductor, I thought you went to Putney! Why didn't you tell me I was in the wrong 'bus?"
CONDUCTOR: "How should I know where you want to go, if you don't tell me?"
NERVOUS OLD GENT: "But what shall I do?"
CONDUCTOR: "'Ave a game of chess with yourself!"

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THE OBVIOUS COURSE.

CHORUS GIRL (bursting into manager's office): "Quick! There's a fire behind the scenes; the girls are rushing about like mad and screaming their heads off. Looks like a panic! What shall we do?"

MANAGER: "Do? Ring up the curtain, of course, and let the audience think it is the opening chorus."

ONLY HIS WATCH.

An old negro was taken ill and called in a physician of his own race. After a time, as there were no signs of improvement, he asked for a white doctor.

Soon after arriving, the doctor felt the old man's pulse, and then examined his tongue.

"Did your other doctor take your temperature?" he asked.

"I don't know, boss," replied the sick negro. "I hain't missed nothing but my watch as yit."

* *

THE UNLUCKY NUMBER.

"Why are you here, my poor friend?" asked the minister who was visiting the prison.

"I'm the victim of the unlucky number thirteen, sir," said the prisoner.

"Indeed. How is that?"

"Twelve jurors and one judge, sir."

* *

DECIDEDLY TOUGH!

"It's hard," said the sentimental landlady at the dinner table, "to think that this poor little lamb should be destroyed in its youth just to cater for our appetites."

"Yes," replied the smart boarder, struggling with his portion, "it is tough."

* *

A DINGY PAST.

POLITICAL AGENT: "Well, did you discover anything in Stump's past life that we can use against him?"

DETECTIVE: "Not a thing. All he ever did before he came here was to sell awnings."

POLITICAL AGENT: "Why, that's just what we want! We'll say that he has been mixed up in some decidedly shady transactions."

* * * * *

AN AWKWARD POSITION.

"Yes," said the shopkeeper, "I want a good, bright boy, to be partly indoors and partly outdoors."

"That's all right," said the applicant, "but what becomes of me when the door slams?"

THE CINEMA ACTORS.

LEOPARD: "I shall cop it, I've been and forgot my part."
THE KING OF BEASTS: "Cheer up, laddie, it doesn't matter. I've just been and swallowed the blessed producer."

THE EASIEST COURSE.

The motorist, arrived on the frontier of Montenegro, found himself involved in a wrangle with the customs officials.

"Here," he shouted to his chauffeur, "put the trunks back on the car again. I'll not go through at all! This is no country. It's only a spot. I don't mind losing ten or twelve minutes; we may as well go round it."

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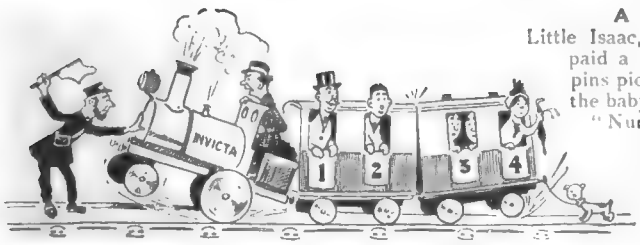
INTENSIVE CULTURE.

I had a little garden plot
That faced a railway line.
The colours that bedecked the spot
So wondrous were and fine
That passengers to gaze again
Would ask the guard to stop the train.

But by the vast expense it brought
My joy was put to rout,
For root and seedling must be bought,
And watercans wear out;
And so I sought to find a way
To make my little garden pay

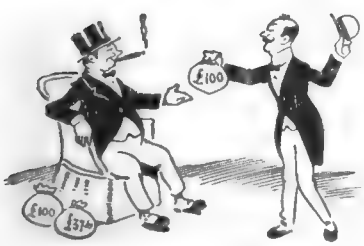


I noticed how my ordered rows
Entranced the passing eyes,
And pointed out the fact to those
Who wished to advertise.
And now my blossoms all declare
The merits of a different ware.

Shaped in my clump of mignonette
A mustard's name is seen,
And in the modest violet
A brand of brilliantine;
While "Binks' Boots for Weary Feet" 's
The message of the marguerites.

Still stands my garden fair to see
With many a varied hue,
But now it also brings to me
A goodly revenue—
A fit reward for one with skill
To harness Nature to his will.

Theta.



"BILL INSIDE."

Bill Smith, a country shopkeeper, went to town to buy some goods. They were sent home before him. When the boxes arrived Mrs. Smith, who was minding the shop, uttered a scream, seized a hatchet, and began to force off the lid of the largest.

"What's the matter?" asked a bystander.

Pale and faint, Mrs. Smith pointed to an inscription on the lid. It read: "Bill inside."

* * * *

SPITEFUL!

JACK: "I was just admiring Mabel's hair. How pretty it is!"

MABEL'S RIVAL: "Oh, she has some prettier than that."

* * * * *

A PAYING PROJECT.

Little Isaac, who was barely six years old, was paid a penny per dozen by his mother for pins picked up from the carpet, since it kept the baby from getting them.

"Nurse," said little Isaac, as his stock of pennies increased, "do you know what I am going to do when I have sixpence?"

"No," answered the nurse.

"I am going to buy a paper of pins, and scatter them all over the floor and then pick them up," replied the young financier.

* * * * *

A TURN FOR THE BETTER.

SHIPWRECKED TRAVELLER (mournfully): "Here we are, stranded on a desert isle and not a thing to eat."

OPTIMISTIC COMPANION: "We can have soup. Our boat has just turned turtle."

* * *

HARD LINES!

PRISONER: "Pretty mean trick you've played me."

WARDER. "Why, what's wrong?"

PRISONER: "Every one o' the stories in this paper you give me 's to be continued—an' me to be hung next week."

* * * * *

A SUDDEN DEPARTURE.

HE (reading paper): "Here's a note about an accident at White's house. The servant girl put some gunpowder in the fire, and she was blown through the roof."

SHE (sympathetically): "Poor Mrs. White has so much trouble with her girls! That makes the fourth that's left her without giving notice."

* * * * *

TAKING NO RISKS.

THE DOCTOR: "Mrs. Brown has sent for me to go and see her boy, and I must go at once."

HIS WIFE: "What is the matter with the boy?"

THE DOCTOR: "I don't know, but Mrs. Brown has a book on 'What to Do Before the Doctor Comes,' and I must hurry up before she does it."

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"Hullo! Exciting news."

"Private Murphy," he asked, "why should a soldier be ready to die for his country?"

The Irishman scratched his head for a while; then an ingratiating and enlightening smile flitted across his face. "Shure, captain," he said pleasantly, "you're quite right. Why should he?"

* * * *

ARSENAL LOST!

She was a good old soul, to whom football was a blank, and she sat quietly knitting while her grandson Tom eagerly scanned the results of the day's matches. All at once Tom uttered an exclamation of disgust, and crushed the paper viciously in his hands.

"What is the matter now?" queried the dame, starting up from her work.

"Arsenal lost!" was the terse and lugubrious reply.

"Well, well, well," sighed the old lady when she had recovered from the shock. "That muddling War Office again, I suppose. They're for ever mislaying something."

* * * * *

A QUESTION OF RANK.

THE NUT (who on a foggy morning has pulled in his car behind a taxi, and is helpless): "What's the matter with the traffic in front, constable? Can't you get it along? It seems to be going all right the other way."

THE CONSTABLE: "Traffic's all serene, sir. You've pulled in on a cab-rank."

WHY, INDEED?

For a solid hour the captain had been lecturing his men on "The Duties of a Soldier," and he thought that now the time had come for him to test the results of his discourse.

Casting his eye around the room, he fixed on Private Murphy as his first victim.

"Phew! my hat—

MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE.

BRAY: "Why did you break your engagement with the school teacher?"

SMYTHE: "Because if I failed to show up at her house every evening she expected me to bring a written excuse signed by my mother."

* * * * *

SHE WAS QUITE SATISFIED.

"Let me see some of your black kid gloves," said a lady to a shop assistant.

"These are not the latest style, are they?" she asked when the gloves were produced.

"Yes, madam," replied the shopman, "we have had them in stock only two days."

"I didn't think they were, because the fashion paper says black kids have tan stitches and *vice versa*; I see the tan stitches, but not the *vice versa*."

The shopman explained that *vice versa* was French for seven buttons, so she bought three pairs.

* * * *

THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENED.

The small man was feeling uncomfortably crushed in the crowded tram when a brilliant inspiration flashed into his head.

He turned to the big man near him.

"I hope you don't object to riding beside a small-pox patient, do you?" he inquired as the car slowed down at the stopping place.

"No; but some of the other passengers might," replied the big man, and, taking him by the shoulders, he threw the schemer out into the road.

—it's gone."

A RECORD SENTENCE.

FIRST CONVICT: "They say it took Milton fifteen days to write one page of a book."

SECOND CONVICT: "That's nothing. I've been on one sentence six years, and I'm not through yet."

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THE SOFT ANSWER.

A well-known French actor became involved in a discussion with an American, grew heated, drew his card from his pocket, threw it on the table with a tragic air, and stalked out.

The American regarded the card for some moments, then took out his fountain pen, wrote "Admit bearer" above the engraved line, and went off to the theatre.

* * * * *

HE KNEW HIS MANNERS.

"What dirty hands you have, Jimmy," said his young teacher. "What would you say if I came to school without washing my hands?"

"Shouldn't say nuffin'," returned Jimmy stoutly. "I'd be too polite."

* *

A NATURAL MISTAKE.

She halted in evident surprise, and pointed with her umbrella at the earnest golfer.

"Dear me, my love," she remarked in audible tones, "what a very respectably-dressed man that is breaking stones!"

* *

EASILY MANAGED.

A young man the other day was talking to his best girl:

"I visited that West-end palmist this afternoon, and he told me I'd marry a brunette," he remarked.

The girl, who was very fair, said thoughtfully:

"Did he say when the marriage would take place?"

"Yes; in three months."

"Well, I can easily be a brunette by that time, dear," said she with a shy smile.

* * * * *

THE USUAL PRICE.

PORTLY OLD GENTLEMAN (protestingly): "What! Sixpence for a shave! I never heard of such a thing!"

BARBER: "Usual price, sir! Twopence a chin! Four for sixpence."

NATURAL HISTORY RESEARCH: Trying to Uncurl a Hedgehog.

JUST OFF.

THE PROFESSOR'S WIFE: "The professor is in the laboratory conducting some experiments. He expects to go down to posterity——"

FROM THE LABORATORY: *B—r—r—r! Bang!*

VISITOR (apprehensively): "I hope the professor hasn't gone."

* * * * *

STILL AT IT.

A certain company promoter once built a castle on a mountain peak. As he showed the grey, mediæval-looking pile to a friend, he said:

"I don't know what to call it. What name do you advise?"

"It looks like those Scotch castles in the Highlands," said his friend. "Why not call it Dunrobin?"

"Dunrobin? Dunrobin? Yes, that would be a good name," said the millionaire; "only, you see, I have no intention of retiring yet."

* *

MORE PROFITABLE.

"You say you earn more by your pen than you did a year ago?"

"I do."

"How's that?"

"I stopped writing stories and began addressing envelopes."

* *

QUITE POSSIBLE.

MAGISTRATE (to prisoner): "Did you really call this gentleman an old fool last night?"

PRISONER (trying to collect his thoughts): "The longer I look at him the more it seems to me likely that I did."

* * * * *

SEEKING A CLUE.

In an American college a student greatly annoyed the professor of natural sciences by asking foolish questions. One day, after he had interrupted the lecturer several times with irrelevant remarks and questions, he asked: "Professor, how long can an animal live without brains?"

"Well," was the professor's reply, "I really don't know, Mr. F———. How old are you?"

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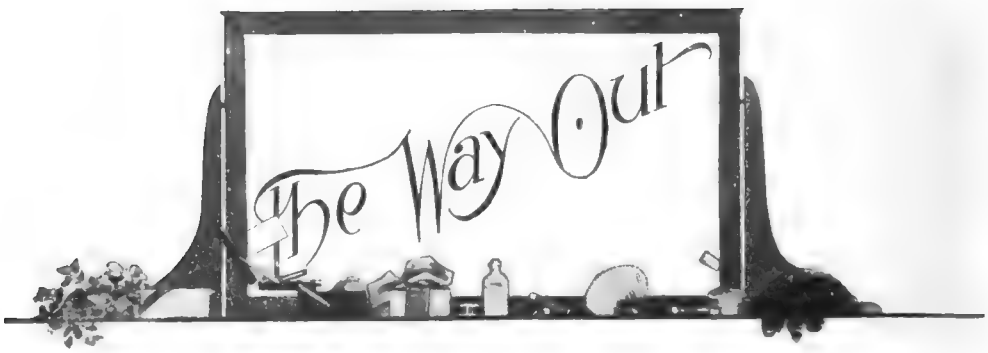

The Story of How Jill Took It.

By Winifred Carter.

I.

"Surely there can be good girls on the stage as well as anywhere else?"

"I can't bear to think of you an actress!" Jill's mother lay back on the bed and covered her face with her hands, and the bitter tears rolled through her fingers and down on to the dingy sheet.

Jill looked at her piteously.

"Mother darling, don't take on so terribly. What else is there for it? Haven't I tried everything else and been a failure?"

Mrs. Norman shook her head feebly.

"I don't know, Jill, I don't know, only I'm afraid to let you go. It's the temptation, and I know your father would never have allowed it."

"Yes, yes, darling, I know, but what can we do? We've not a farthing. Father left us to get this gold, and there's never been a letter or a word from him. I can't bear it any longer—with you eating your heart out and gradually starving to death. I can't get work. What do you think could prove a temptation to *me?* Haven't I refrained from stealing when I was so hungry I could have eaten shoe leather? Haven't I kept from snatching a purse filled with gold, from a rich woman who wouldn't have felt the loss? It's done now. I'm going on the stage in spite of everything. It's my last chance."

Jill Norman clenched her fists and drew herself up to her full height. Her cheeks were pale and the blue marks under her fine eyes showed that she was literally starving.

Work, the kind she wanted, was not to be found.

And now she had a chance of going on the stage to be a show girl, and her mother, almost as hungry as she was, would not let her do it.

"Let me go mother," Jill pleaded fiercely. "If you don't consent, I shall still go."

"Father used to say that honour was worth more than anything on earth," Mrs. Norman said tremulously.

Jill flung herself down and laid her sof white cheek on her mother's hand.

"Darling, I know how to keep my honour untarnished. I don't fear, so why should you? If I let this go, we shall both starve, and you know it. Besides, Mr. Blake is doing me a great favour in getting this offer. There seem hundreds of girls to fill every vacancy."

She sighed wearily, hopelessly. It wasn't as though she longed for stage life; it was because of her mother, her darling mother whom she loved so dearly. Mrs. Norman did not speak and Jill saw to her horror that she had fainted. It was the one thing needed finally to decide Jill. Whatever her mother said she would take the offer. Whatever it meant, she must get work. She must keep her mother and only if she could get food would that be possible.

Jill ran down to the old landlady.

"Well, Miss, and have you come to your senses? Are you going to take Mr. Blake's offer, or are you going to be turned out lock, stock, and barrel?" said the woman impertinently.

Jill winced at the coarse words. This Mr. Blake, a successful comedian, had been the favourite boarder in the lodging-house, and he had offered to get Jill a "walk on." Since then, Jill's position in the place

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had not been worth a moment's peace, for the old harridan saw a chance of getting her money and never ceased worrying the girl.

"Yes, I am going to take the offer, Mrs. Gibbs," replied Jill quietly. "Will you let me have some tea and toast now, for mother? She is hungry."

"I guess she is. She didn't eat the bacon so that you could have some to-morrow. Too good for this world you two are, but you'll get a bit of that rubbed off you at the High Jinks Theatre," muttered the woman as she got the food, threw it on a tray, and passed it to Jill.

She gave her mother her tea and watched a little colour flit into the pale cheeks. Then a knock sounded at the door and she heard James Blake's voice outside calling her.

Thankful to see her mother better, Jill left her and ran out into the corridor.

"Will you come in, Mr. Blake?" she asked. He was beaming on her, but oh! how she disliked him.

"No, I've only a moment," he said breezily. "The old girl downstairs says you're going on, so that's all right. Now, have you thought over what you'll do for a fortnight during rehearsals? You'll get no money, you know, until the opening."

Jill's face fell. "No, I didn't know that," she said mournfully. "We've absolutely nothing left. I pawned mother's engagement ring last week to get money to pay Mrs. Gibbs, and that's finished up to-day."

James Blake smiled in his most objectionable way, as he plunged his hand into his pocket and brought out a handful of loose coins.

He counted out two pounds and as he did it, the colour mounted slowly and painfully into the girl's cheeks.

"That'll tide you over a week; then I'll give you another couple," he said grandiosely.

"I can't take it," retorted Jill. "I certainly won't take money from a man."

"Don't be a fool, Jill! What do you think the management will say to me if I take a girl such as you look now, to get a 'walk on.' They want fine creatures, not milk-and-water stuff. You'll be right enough with a bit of feeding up, but you won't do anyhow half-starved. You'll lose the place if you don't feed up."

He chucked Jill under the chin familiarly, and then, well pleased with himself, turned on his heel, leaving her panting with rage.

Her mother noticed Jill's pink cheeks from which the shamed blush had not yet faded, and a wistful smile came into her eyes.

"After all, Jill," she said haltingly, "it may be a good thing; you look better already."

II.

Jill Norman walked across the stage with her wonderful frock limning her supple, well-made body. Her hair, as black as ebony, was drawn, Madonna-like, round her ears, and a magnificent feather branched out from an amber setting. Yellow and deep orange was her dress, and the agile grace that she displayed held the attention of a man sitting in a box.

John Leary, financier and owner of one of the largest gold mines in the world, looked at her curiously as she crossed the stage. She, somehow, missed the mannequin-like strut that the other "walk-ons" had. She looked different, and, somehow, oddly, her beauty hurt him.

He, hard-hearted, hard-headed John Leary, the terror of the folks who tried to get the better of him, a power in the financial world, was queerly touched by a "walk-on."

A sneer curved his well-shaped lips. The rest of his face was scarred and twisted. His hair was white. He had a fine head, but his face was amazingly ugly save for his mouth, and he was as hard as nails.

He pulled out a card and wrote on it, giving it to a messenger to take round to Jill. Then he leant back and waited with growing impatience for the answer.

He had been bored at first by the new *revue*. He felt like strangling the tango dancers with their futile inanities, but the instant that lithe form, with its burden of orange draperies and its fringed skirt, came on, he had felt a queer emotion thrilling him. Surely, never had such a feeling thrilled him before.

His was a peculiar existence. Some kink in his nature prevented him from making friends. What he did with his enormous wealth no one knew, but certain it was he did not spend it.

He was often at the theatre, though apparently nothing pleased him there, and his eyes seemed always searching, though no one, and least of all himself, knew for what he was searching.

He got his answer—a pencilled "Yes." Then he waited impatiently until the performance was over. Jill had accepted his invitation to supper, and he longed for the

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moment to come so that he could see her face, watch her over the soft lights of a supper-table, and see why it was she had so affected him.

And Jill, in the dressing-room, with five others of her sex all struggling to change in a painfully inadequate space, heralded his card as a saviour. They had been playing now for three weeks, and during those weeks she had endured more misery than ever she imagined existed.

She was far too good-looking to be left alone, but it was from James Blake, coarse, handsome, brutal James Blake, that the trouble came. She had taken his money, and however much she resented his manner, she could say little, and because she had had to take his money, his proprietary air was none the less hateful.

To-night, as she came from the dressing-room, he had kissed her, ruthlessly, brutally, caring not that she shrank and trembled and almost fainted. "Come with me to supper to-night, Jill, old girl!" he had said familiarly.

She would have flung his money in his teeth, but she hadn't got it. Out of the twenty-five shillings a week that she earned, she found she had nothing left. 'Bus fares, her own food, and the luxuries she got for her mother, took her small wage each week, and she had lost hope of ever paying back the four pounds she had taken from Blake.

To sell one's soul for four pounds!

The note on John Leary's card was handed to her when she had come from the stage and was just about to change into another creation even more gorgeous than the yellow and orange dress.

She read it slowly, and hope, ever ready, sprang to life again in her heart.

Will you come to supper with me to-night? I will wait outside the stage-door with my car.

JOHN LEARY.

The way out! She did not know the man, but he could not be worse than James Blake, and the feeling that she was the bird and Blake the snake, made her sick with fear and dread, so that she would have turned anywhere to escape him.

"Do you know who John Leary is?" she asked the other girls.

They crowded round her and exclaimed at her luck.

"He's a rich man, ugly as Satan, and known to be without a heart. He's got piles of money. You're in luck, dear."

Jill hesitated for a moment and then took the plunge. She pencilled "Yes" on the card, and afterwards wondered wretchedly if she had only taken one step further down the ladder of life instead of one up.

With all her heart she longed for a quiet home life, and here she was thrust into this atmosphere of show and glitter.

The play went along brightly, and at last Jill dragged herself wearily out of her last frock, put on the quiet, black coat and leather hat, and slowly, fearfully, went to the stage-door. Blake was waiting for her impatiently.

"Come on," he said. "You've been a long time!"

John Leary pushed him on one side and took the girl's unresisting hand. In James Blake's menacing face the car door was shut with a bang and they whirred away. Under the shaded lights Jill sat, breathing heavily. Facing her, with brightly burning eyes, sat John Leary. He was ugly, but, oh! how much more was that ugliness to be desired than James Blake's blatant good looks.

A queer sense of familiarity thrilled Jill, and her panic fell away instantly. This man would do her no hurt. He was kind and to be trusted in spite of his ugly, scarred face.

She looked across at him, her big, weary eyes bright with excitement. Black circles under them did not detract from their beauty. Then great tears forced their way down on the fur rug.

"Now, you mustn't cry. I am not an ogre, my dear," said John Leary, and he was astonished at the tenderness in his own voice.

"I was terribly afraid. To-night, I felt that I could struggle no longer, and now to find peace and not war is too great a relief," she said with a gasp.

"You trust me, then?" asked the man quietly, and his bright eyes searched her face for something, he didn't quite know what—that elusive something which haunted him badly, but which he couldn't explain, couldn't fathom.

"Yes, now, but at first I didn't know you, and I was frightened. I'm so tired!

She ended falteringly. She would not tell him all she feared, or all the torture she had endured mentally from her terroriser, Blake.

"I wish," said the man earnestly— Then he paused. What was it he did wish? He didn't know. Something was puzzling him and he didn't even know what! It vexed him. She was very beautiful indeed, and he pulled the rug under her chin as she shivered, in spite of the warmth of the lovely car.

"Thank you," murmured Jill simply.

"Tell me about your life," the man said

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abruptly, and, startled, Jill looked across at him. "Why did you go on the stage? It's no place for a delicately-nurtured girl. What were your parents doing?"

"Mother was dying of starvation. I don't know where father is. Dead, I think," she explained drearily.

"Tell me," insisted John Leary. "Don't be afraid. I'm going to help you."

"Ten years ago father bought a mine in South Africa from a friend who had no money and who needed some badly. The mine he knew was useless, but five years ago it was rumoured that gold was there in big quantities.

"Father went to Africa and we never heard from him. The money left behind was stolen by a rascally lawyer. It would have lasted us for a long while, but after the theft we had nothing. We sold everything we could. Father had a hatred of the stage, and once when I was a baby, and mother was talking of actresses, he said: 'We'll never let our lassie go on the boards, please God,' and so mother held out."

To-night, as she came from the dressing-room, he had kissed her, ruthlessly, brutally, caring not that she shrank and trembled and almost fainted.

She sighed and looked at the streets. Fate had not been good to her; would this night alter things? Would this man really befriend her? Did a man ever help disinterestedly? she wondered dully.

"Will you take me to your mother?" the man asked in a staccato voice.

Jill looked at him in astonishment. She began to feel uneasy. "She'll be in bed and I couldn't disturb her now," she said timidly.

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"You must," insisted the man firmly. "If I am to help you, I must see your mother."

A sob rose in Jill's throat. She was so weary that she felt unable to cope with this man who radiated strength and power. But equally she couldn't let him see her mother. How could she explain that she was going with him to supper? How could she tell her mother that Blake had been the only alternative?

"You mustn't come," she said in a frightened whisper. "It would kill mother to know I was going out with you."

The man stretched out his hand and closed it over her cold one.

"Poor child!" he said pitifully. "I promise you I won't hurt your mother. Let me come and see her just for a moment. She will be glad to see anyone who can save her daughter."

Almost against her will, yet oddly comforted, Jill told him the address, and the great car rushed swiftly along towards the lodging-house.

John Leary followed Jill silently to the door, and then, when she had unlocked it, followed her up the gloomy stairs towards that couple of upper rooms which were "home."

Inside, a tiny flare of gas burnt dingily and Jill turned it up, feeling in a dream. She was ashamed to let this well-dressed and wealthy man see their dire poverty, but now she knew she could not help it. Something apart from herself kept her silent. On the table was a white cloth, spotless, but with many darns. A piece of bread and a thin slice of cheese, her frugal supper, lay waiting for Jill.

"Well?" said Jill, almost voicelessly.

The man did not speak, but something in his eyes, as they turned past her to the bedroom door, startled her.

Her mother was standing there in her thin flannelette nightgown, her still luxuriant hair falling down her back. That white face, with its big dark eyes so strangely like Jill's, stared out, not at Jill, but at Leary.

Suddenly, Jill was of no account. She could only stand and watch and marvel. Then her mother's face grew crimson; a great wave of happiness passed over it, transforming it into strange, ethereal beauty.

With difficulty Jill looked away to the man. His face was twisted as though in a great effort of remembrance, and then gradually the pain passed. He held out his arms, and Mrs. Norman stumbled across the room to those outstretched arms.

"My husband!" she cried thrillingly. "My husband!"

* * * * *

It was much later, and the clock in the tower of the little church over the way had boomed twelve and then one, before Jill crept from the dingy little bedroom into the living room. John Leary had piled up all the coal there was and had made the fire a cheery one, and his wife was nestling in the crook of his arm, safe and happy once again.

Jill came in and faced them. She had taken down her hair and it fell in two great plaits down to her waist, and her happy, shining eyes gazed at the mother she so loved, and at the stranger who could never quite take, she felt sure, her father's old place.

But, as soon as he spoke to her, and held out his unoccupied arm, and called her his "little Jill," the voice that had been John Leary's became merged into the voice that had been her father's.

And so she sat down and snuggled against him, to hear the story of his silence.

It was a simple story. He had found that the mine really was a gold mine. He had struck wealth in a great quantity and then had come the grim silence which had been worse than death for his wife and child.

A great mass of earth loosened in the prospecting had fallen, killing his comrade, and crushing John Leary. No one knew him. He had come out under another name to see for himself if reports had been true.

For days he had lain in hospital, only to recover without his memory. With his face scarred and unrecognisable he had come back to England. But he was rich and so the world took him in.

Memory's chords had been struck when Jill had walked across the stage, and as she had talked of the little mother, emotion had risen to breaking point. Then as his wife had come round the door memory returned.

"But I knew you, Jack," said his wife softly, "in spite of the alteration, in spite of the voice, I knew you. Love told me!"

"And can you still love me?" he asked wistfully. "Look at my white hair and ugly face—can you still love me?"

"It's the most beautiful face in the world to me," declared his wife fiercely.

But Jill could only press hot kisses on his hand. She was beginning to realise that God had found her—a way out.

£1000 for Picture Puzzles. See Page 170.

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His face was twisted as though in a great effort of remembrance, and then gradually the pain passed. He held out his arms, and Mrs. Norman stumbled across the room to those outstretched arms.

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Please!

Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

Miss Gladys Cooper (Mrs Buckmaster), and her little daughter Joan.

Every year we appeal in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE on behalf of the Fresh Air Fund, which sends poor city children to the country for a day, and in some cases for a fortnight.

This year Miss Gladys Cooper, than whom there is no more charming or popular actress on the British stage, has very kindly consented to lend the weight of her name and personality to our appeal. Further, she has offered to present a signed portrait of herself to every reader of THE ROYAL who subscribes £1 or more to the Fresh Air Fund.

Below Miss Cooper pleads the cause of the poor little city children with sympathetic eloquence.

May I add that ninepence sends a child to the country for a day, £8 2s. will buy a party of two hundred children a day's holiday with the necessary adults to look after them, and ten shillings sends one child to the country for a fortnight?

Please address all subscriptions to the Hon. Sec., Fresh Air Fund, c.o. THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

THE EDITOR.

Last year I wrote an article for the Royal which some of you may remember. The Editor asked me to describe my ideal holiday and so I did to the best of my ability. I said how I loved bathing, and motoring, and golfing - anything in fact that keeps me in the open air, because when one works long hours in a theatre, fresh air is an absolute necessity.

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This year I want to talk about another ideal holiday. Not for myself but for the poor little City Children who will never get one unless some kind friend provides the necessary money. I am very interested in the "Fresh Air Fund" which sends these children into the country for a day, or, in some cases, for a fortnight. My own little girl loves country holidays. And so do all children. Will you help this fund, not merely because I ask you, but because it does good to the young and helpless who cannot help themselves. Please send at least the difference which buys the child a long day in the country. And if you will subscribe a Sovereign or more I should be so happy (if you would care to have one) to send you a Sigma Photograph of myself. Will you help us? Please do! Yours very gratefully

Gladys Cooper

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MY BIGGEST BLUNDER

Errors of Judgment Illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.

By Sidney Mattingly.

A picture of an old toper is not a well-chosen present for an elderly spinster, and its frigid reception is strikingly illustrated by Miss McKie.

"Love's Young Dream"—the rash outpourings of a lovesick youth depicted by Mr. Thomas Henry.

In these days when records are made and broken regularly twice a fortnight, it is interesting and surprising to reflect that the record for stupidity has been held by one man for many years.

I allude of course to Tomlinson. Stupidity with him is more than a mere habit; it is an art to which he has devoted his life.

He was present once at a house-party given by Lady Tressingham to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of her twenty-ninth birthday. By a fell mischance, Lady Tressingham had given out her false hair to be brushed the night before; her maid mislaid it, and Tomlinson, with his unerring instinct for doing the wrong thing, retrieved it and presented it publicly to his hostess at breakfast. *The Society Snail*, one of the more impertinent Society papers of the moment, got hold of the story and printed annoying questions about it.

Tomlinson, who had meant well,

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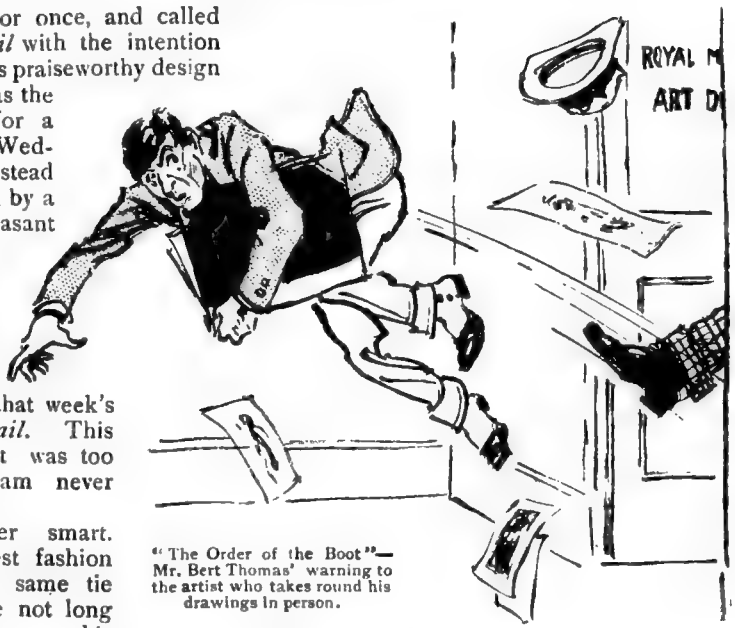
was fearfully annoyed for once, and called at the offices of the *Snail* with the intention of killing the editor. His praiseworthy design was thwarted, however, as the gentleman was away for a week-end (it was on a Wednesday), and he was instead engaged in conversation by a very affable and pleasant youth who suggested that the simplest way for Tomlinson to stop the circulation of the objectionable matter would be to buy up the unsold portion of that week's edition of the *Snail*. This Tomlinson did. But it was too late. Lady Tressingham never spoke to him again.



"The Order of the Boot"—Mr. Bert Thomas' warning to the artist who takes round his drawings in person.

Tomlinson is rather smart. He dresses in the latest fashion and never wears the same tie twice. But at one time not long ago he was in low water, as his goutiest uncle had just cut off his allowance, owing to Tomlinson having argued with him about Tariff Reform. Of course, it was very unfortunate; Tomlinson was referring to a horse of that name, his uncle to the thing people lose their tempers about, and consequently they were at cross-purposes and quarrelled. Tomlinson's uncle altered his will, and Tomlinson, being left penniless until his next quarter's allowance from his next-goutiest uncle came in, went into the tea trade.

Mr. Alfred Leete recalls the time when, trustful and generous, he believed the pathetic story of the starving actor.

He called on all his friends and acquaintances with his pockets full of sample packets. Trade was not very brisk. In fact, he never actually sold any tea.

This, of course, was very unprofitable, but it was no worse than that until Tomlinson called on Miss Emily Tucker. Miss Emily Tucker was a maiden of about thirty-seven, and Tomlinson, who was by now getting desperate, called on her three times without ever

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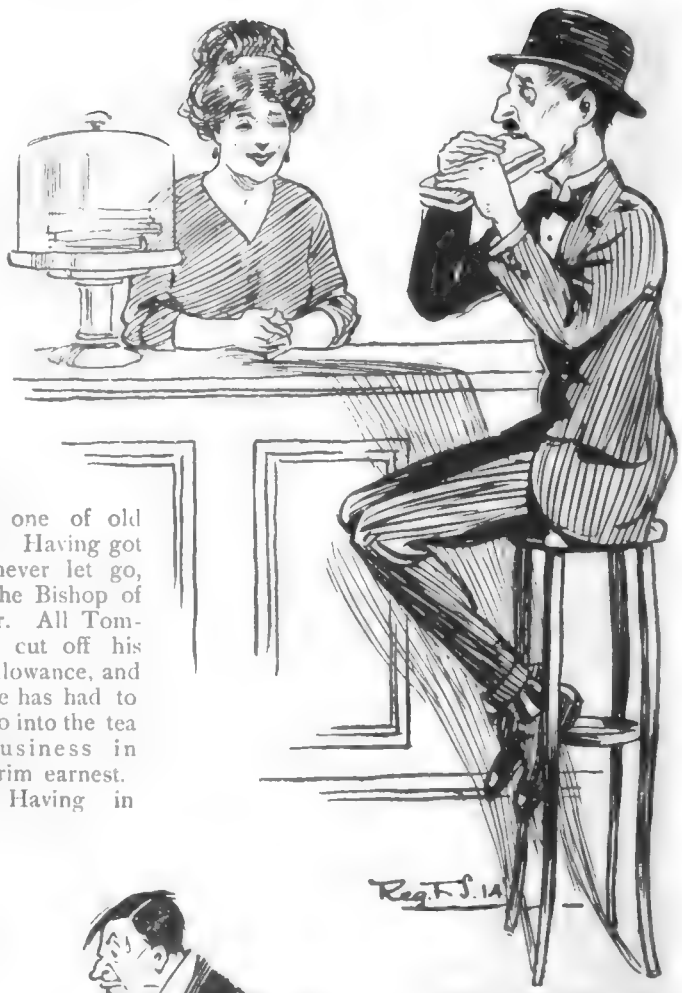
succeeding in coming to the point. He was constantly saying how much he would esteem her patronage, and how he hoped also for her kind recommendation, but Miss Tucker, who, hitherto, had always purchased her tea at the grocer's, could not gather the drift of his argument. But on the third day, when Tomlinson was telling her how eagerly he would obey her lightest command (though he says he expected an order for 5 lb. at least), light suddenly dawned on her. She accepted him instantly.

Miss Emily Tucker was one of old England's bull-dog breed. Having got hold of Tomlinson she never let go, and they were married by the Bishop of Balham three months later. All Tomlinson's uncles have now cut off his allowance, and he has had to go into the tea business in grim earnest.

Having in addition to this culminating act of folly, lost more umbrellas, missed more trains, and offended more rich relatives than any man in history, no one will dispute Tomlinson's title to hold the record for stupidity.



Mr. Reginald Smith depicts the folly of trying to make simultaneous impressions on the refreshment room sandwich and attendant.

"The Time of His Life"—the unhappy plight of the man who took the clock to pieces, touchingly portrayed by Esmond.

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Concerning a Milkmaid

By Dorothy O'Venden.

"Where are you going to, my pretty maid?"
"I'm going a-milking, sir!" she said"

I.

"Your colour-scheme is all wrong," remarked the Artist abruptly to the Milkmaid on the other side of the railing. ("Milkmaid" is a relative term; as a matter of fact, she was feeding chickens.)

She turned to eye him composedly, and at once you saw that she was a gigantic fraud—a very impostor among milkmaids.

A genuine specimen would either have blushed or giggled — she did neither — and then exclaimed, "Goodness gracious, sir! You did give me a turn!"

What she actually said was: "The blue is being washed," and then returned to her chickens.

"But why have a pink frock at all?" groaned the Artist. "Why not stick to blue, which matches your eyes, or amber, which breathes of your hair, or green, which makes you into a hawthorn——"

He stopped suddenly, and, with a startled gesture, appeared to emerge from a trance.

"Have I been talking aloud?" he asked with anxiety.

A dimple appeared in the cheek nearest him—and vanished, to his regret.

"You complained of my colour-scheme, sir," she responded demurely.

The Artist shook his head.

"A fatal habit," he murmured, "and one born of two solid weeks in this inf — this dead-and-alive village. Yesterday I met four dogs, one baby, and the postman. To-day two of the dogs had a fight, and the excitement has been too much for me."

He sighed, and, drawing a battered briar from his pocket, began filling it leisurely.

The Milkmaid, scattering a last handful to the expectant fowls, threw him a carefully careless glance, and discovered, with the perspicacity of her sex, that he was

(a) Young,
(b) Good-looking,
(c) A gentleman,
(d) Unconventional.
(e) That he smelt of turpentine.

Absorbed, he bent over his pipe, and her gaze, still carefully inattentive, travelled over

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the entirely reprehensible Norfolk coat, threadbare and paint-stained, the long, nervous hands—sure indication of the creative faculty—over the crisp black curls defying all attempt to plaster them down, and rested a second longer on the lean, humorous face.

"Milkmaid," he said at last, breaking the silence, "do you think you will be wearing the blue to-morrow?"

She reflected.

"I might," she admitted gravely.

"If," he said, with equal gravity, "the blue suits you as well as the pink—er—doesn't, I will paint you, supposing I have the energy. Good-evening."

"Good-evening, sir," returned the Milkmaid, and, gathering up corn and maize, departed.

The Artist stared absently after her.

The sweet, drowsy perfume of tobacco-plants stole upon the air; a star glimmered faintly through the dusk; white moths fluttered vaguely overhead.

The Artist knocked out the ashes of his pipe, and strolled home to a prosaic supper of bread-and-cheese.

An hour later he addressed his landlady, as she cleared away with the ponderous dignity suitable to her years and girth.

"Mrs. Biggs, at what time do they milk the cows round here?"

"In the morning at 'alf-past five, sir."

"Half-pa—— Good Heavens!"

Mrs. Biggs placidly folded the cloth.

"Well, when," began the Artist, reviving, "do they feed the chickens?"

The dame regarded him thoughtfully.

"Whose chickens, sir?" she inquired blandly.

"Any chickens," said the Artist hastily, avoiding her eye.

"Mostly any time," stated Mrs. Biggs, after cogitation. "Will there be anything furth——"

There would not.

Mrs. Biggs shut the door.

Next morning he overtook the Milkmaid returning from the village. She wore a blue cotton frock, and a white straw hat crowned her silky hair like a halo.

She greeted him with a calm self-possession that no truly country-bred damsel should have exhibited. She was the Goose-girl modernised, a princess temporarily disguised as a peasant.

"Blue and gold," murmured the Artist, regarding her with professional enthusiasm, as he relieved her of her basket.

"Blue and gold?" she repeated interrogatively.

"The key-note of your picture" he explained. "I mean to paint you at once, before the 'first, fine, careless rapture' fades. Tell me, when can you sit for me?"

"Will this afternoon do, sir? When I've washed up?"

This last seemed an afterthought.

The Artist opined that it would.

Three o'clock. The paddock ablaze with sunshine. Perched in the fork of an apple-tree, on a cushion ("which will *not* appear in the picture," remarked the Artist), was the Milkmaid, wearing a mutinous expression.

The Artist's hair was ruffled, but *his* expression was that of a man who has won his Waterloo.

Half-an-hour before, that gentleman, strolling into the paddock, had beheld a horrid sight, namely, a Milkmaid in her Sunday best.

In vain she pleaded that it was blue, and that the Peter Pan "set" had cost one-and-sixpence three farthings.

Inexorably she was sent back to change into her frock of the morning.

"And I thought," he said sadly, addressing the skies, "that she was an imitation milkmaid; her voice misled me, I suppose. She has the accent of Mayfair, and the taste of a South Sea Islander. Her parents are clean and respectable, after all; probably on Sundays they sit in a red plush parlour, while she plays 'The Maiden's Prayer.'"

Her reappearance put a stop to his soliloquy, and he fell to making rapid crayon studies of her—clever if restless sketches, with a blur of green behind a hazy blue frock, and luminous sea-blue eyes, framed in the burnished gold of her hair.

He began to work in earnest at the second sitting, painting with deft, incisive strokes, and flooding the canvas with yellow sunlight.

In the intervals of painting, he also speculated about his model.

He wished that she would not call him "sir." He wished that her ideas of dress were less crude. On Sunday, for instance, he met her going to church in a hat that was purple and impossible. Moreover, her parents were stout, rubicund people, by the side of the Milkmaid blatantly unbeautiful.

Had she been of his own world—— But as it was——

The voice of the model interrupted his disjointed musings.

"Please, may I rest, sir?"

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Perched in the fork of an apple-tree, on a cushion ("which will *not* appear in the picture," remarked the Artist), was the Milkmaid, wearing a mutinous expression.

"My dear Milkmaid! How careless of me to forget. Jump down and criticise."

She slipped from her perch, and regarded the picture sedately

"What shall you call it, sir?" she inquired.

"Blue and gold! You see the frock is blue, and the rest—your hair and the sunlight—is mainly gold——"

"And will the frame be gold, too?" she asked seriously.

"I wonder," said the Artist, somewhat irrelevantly, "what you would be like if you had a sense of humour?"

There seemed to be no answer to this question, and, with a sigh, he bade her return to her pose.

A week later, the picture was nearing completion.

Half-an-hour's labour over some trivial detail had apparently exhausted the Artist, who lay flat on his back gazing at the model as she swung her slim ankles.

For a few moments there was a pause, broken only by the monotonous whirr of a machine behind some buildings.

The Milkmaid seemed gazing dreamily into futurity.

The Artist, clasping his knees, marvelled anew at the exquisite perfection of her, the flawless features, and perhaps the most astonishing of all, the delicious voice, with the least hint of a drawl.

Yet, in flagrant contradiction of all this, shattering every æsthetic dream, ever and anon she would reveal herself as hopelessly lower middle-class by an unmistakable phrase or trick of speech. And the Artist belonged to a world where it is better to be hanged by the neck till you are dead than to be "lower middle-class."

A summons from it had arrived that morning, and even now reposed in his pocket. The summons bore a coronet, and came from his godmother.

"You've been nearly a month in that stupid village; I'll never believe you're painting cows all this while. If you're not more

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explicit, I shall come and see her for myself.

"Through this silly Back-to-the-Land business you've missed Bobby Brydgely, the success of the season. She is delightful—very well off, and as serenely independent of convention as, well, as you are. So tiresome! I'm sure you would have liked her."

The Artist's eyebrows drew together in a frown. The Duchess of Southshire was a vivacious lady, quite capable of coming to "see for herself" if necessary—or unnecessary. With a brusque movement he rose to his feet and began gathering together his materials.

Without looking at the Milkmaid, he said: "I am going away to-morrow."

"Oh!" she exclaimed with a little gasp. "Right away?"

"Back to London Town, where there are milkcans instead of Milkmaids. I am sick of a fever and country air is bad for it."

"A fever?" she repeated, with round eyes.

"Heart trouble, to be exact. You like people to be exact, don't you?"

His old half-quizzical smile showed for an instant, and was as instantly eclipsed.

"Good-bye," he said quietly. "I may see you to-morrow before I go."

The Milkmaid said good-bye.

II.

Yes, Her Grace expected Mr. Daring; Her Grace was in the library; would Mr. Daring step this way?

Silk-stockinged officials relieved him of hat and stick, and, throwing open the ponderous carved door, announced:

"The Honourable Clive Daring!"

"And high time, too!" said the Duchess severely, as the Artist bent over her hand with exaggerated deference. "Now, sit down, and tell me what you've been doing all this while. Four weeks, and the season in full swing. The idea!"

"I told you I was at Marton-under-Fosse."

"Marton-under-Fosse, indeed, and tramped about in that fearful coat as usual, I suppose—or has it fallen to pieces yet?"

"By no means! Two more safety-pins and some string have worked wonders," he assured her imperturbably.

"And what did you find to paint down there?" she demanded.

"Among other things, a milkmaid—the best thing I've done yet. You must come and see it."

He looked at her with the clear, direct gaze of one whose conscience is perfectly guilty.

"If it's really good, I will come," returned the Duchess, who believed in her godson, though she usually affected not to. "What was she like?"

His face was in the shadow as he answered.

"Her hair was like spilt sunlight, and her eyes were sea-blue and full of dreams—serious dreams—until she smiled."

"So are everyone else's, except for the sea-blue bit," remarked his godmother ruthlessly, giving him a searching look. "And did you fall in love with her?"

He was prepared for this, and had decided that the best way to conceal the skeleton in the cupboard would be to leave the door ajar. Then no one would trouble to look inside.

"Very nearly. In fact, quite, for a day or two. But she wore a purple hat with 'fevvers,' and she talked about Ladies and Gentlemen, so I decided not to."

Satisfied on this point, the Duchess reverted to her grievance.

"Anyway, you missed seeing Bobby Brydgely, and I did so want you to meet."

"Am I required to marry Bobby, or paint her?" inquired the Artist plaintively.

"Her father wanted you to paint her——"

"And you want me to marry her, and, owing to her absence, I can't oblige either of you. Most unfortunate! And now, when are you coming to take tea with me?"

The Artist was growing restive.

"Let me see; the Charity Fête to-morrow; Wednesday, a wedding; Thursday—where's my engagement book? Ah-h! I'll come on Friday. I might bring Grace King with me," in reflective tones.

"For lack of Bobby?" he suggested ironically.

The Duchess made a highly unducal grimace at him.

III.

"And now, Clive," said the Duchess briskly, "where's this masterpiece of yours?"

"Don't give in yet, godmother; there are three strawberries left."

"Rubbish!" was the retort; upon which the Artist rose and led the way to the studio.

"Blue and Gold" stood on an easel at the further end of the room, with the light full upon it.

The Duchess put up her lorgnette, and

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"Blue and Gold" stood on an easel at the further end of the room. . . . The Duchess put up her lorgnette, and surveyed it for a long moment without speaking.

surveyed it for a long moment without speaking. Then she turned and regarded him mercilessly, until a dull colour stole under his tan.

"And so you nearly fell in love with her, Clive?"

"Very nearly," he agreed with an attempt at lightness.

"And she wore a purple hat with 'fevvers,'" murmured Her Grace, "and talked about Ladies and G-Gentlemen. Dear me!"

Her voice quivered suspiciously for an instant, and he set his lips. She forbore to tease him further, however, and commended the picture whole-heartedly, showing a rare appreciation of its masterly technique.

Only, as they passed out again, she said suddenly:

"Er—by the way, Clive, I suppose you never actually *saw* her milking?"

"No-o! Come to think of it, I christened her quite arbitrarily; I never knew her name."

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The Milkmaid-that-was, sank into an armchair, a mischievously reminiscent smile curving her lips.

"Ah! Probably Jane Hodge, or something of the kind," said the Duchess, buttoning her gloves.

Three weeks later, the Artist learnt from *The Social Round* that Miss Roberta Brydgely was back in town. Therefore, a note from the Duchess, in the imperative mood, demanding his presence on Wednesday afternoon, did not greatly surprise him.

His godmother was a persistent person, and her chief hobby was "marrying" people.

June had given way to July; the days were dusty and hot, the nights sleepless—to the Honourable Clive Daring, who was finding it a harder task to forget than he had imagined.

A newly-acquired furrow showed between his eyes to-day as he waited in the white drawing-room, beating a restless tattoo with a piece of priceless Sèvres.

He turned as the door opened and a girl came in, slender, perfectly gowned in amber silk crêpe and a black-and-gold hat that spelt Paris tilted on her burnished hair.

And beneath it, her eyes were as sea-blue as ever.

The Sèvres ornament dropped with a crash, and the Artist, in one stride as it seemed, was in front of her.

"*You!*" he said, possessing himself of both her hands, while his heart thumped riotously against his ribs.

"We've never been introduced, and you don't know my name, and I don't think you ought to hold my hands," she observed demurely, though her eyes danced.

"Name be hanged—so long as it isn't Bobby Brydgely."

"B—but it *is*," she murmured guiltily.

"What!" He stepped back a pace in astonishment.

"I really am Roberta Brydgely."

"But I don't understand," he said in bewildered tones. "Were you in two places at once, or was the Duchess telling fibs?"

"Neither. You were at Marton-under-Fosse for two weeks before I came, if you remember?"

"In that case, it *is* mathematically possible, but I still don't see——"

"I'd better explain from the beginning," she remarked.

The Milkmaid-that-was, sank into an armchair, a mischievously reminiscent smile curving her lips for an instant, and the Artist took up a judicial attitude by the fireplace, which gave him an uninterrupted view of her profile.

"You see," she began, "my old nurse lives at Marton, and I'd been doing things rather strenuously, and was beginning to feel a bit worn out, so I ran down to see her, and lead an early-to-bed, early-to-rise existence

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for a few days. When she started to gossip about the painting-gentleman called Daring, I guessed at once who it was. The Duchess had held forth at great length about 'Clive,' and Daddy's been wild for you to paint me since he saw your 'Saville' group at the Academy."

"This entirely unsolicited testimonial—" murmured Clive.

She flashed a glance at him, and resumed calmly.

"So I was awfully interested, and meant to get the Rector to introduce us. But, before I could manage it, you came along, and on the strength of a cotton frock, you labelled me——"

"It was dusk," he interrupted, flushing hotly, "and you kept it up so cool—so exceedingly well; once or twice I had a suspicion, but that 'Sunday-best'!" The Artist turned his face, and his shoulders shook with emotion.

Then he grew grave again, and reverting to his former position, stared into the sea-blue, inscrutable eyes.

"'If Maud were all that she seemed,'" he quoted, half under his breath. "Whose was it really?"

"The servant's. I borrowed it. She was immensely flattered.

"It was simply too artistic to spoil; you'd never have painted so well if you'd known. Poor old Nannie was dreadfully horrified at her nurseling being portrayed in blue cotton. I had to tell her it was going to be fashionable—and so it will be," with deep satisfaction.

After a pause: "And I daresay I ought to apologise, but I shan't," she concluded serenely, and looked at him with the remembered smile.

Then she added softly: "Is—is your—*heart* any better?"

The Artist left the mantelpiece and put his arms round her.

"You ought to know, because you have it," he said, as he kissed the Milkmaid.

QUEEN JUNE.

June's the queen of months and roses,
When the nightingale discloses
Its affection for the moon.
Some fresh charm each day discovers—
'Tis the month beloved of lovers,
Every hour a priceless boon.

June's the month when man proposes,
While mamma discreetly dozes
In the drowsy afternoon;
When the orange blossom bloometh,
And the Wedding March loud boometh,
Ground is with confetti strewn.

Month for doves (described as "turtle");
Month when through the air do hurtle
Countless old, white satin shoon.
From the calendar who'd lose it?
From the rest who would not choose it
For the ideal honeymoon?

Ada Leonora Harris

If
you want
£1000
P.T.O.

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£1000 IN PRIZES.

GREAT NEW PICTURE PUZZLE COMPETITION.

THE EDITOR OF THE ROYAL MAGAZINE is giving away the most colossal sum ever offered to the readers of a monthly magazine—no less than £1000 (one thousand pounds) in prizes for a simple competition.

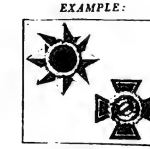
On the opposite page you will find a set of six pictures representing the names of railway stations which have been selected by the Editor, and further sets of pictures will appear monthly in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE. The big cash prizes are offered to the readers who discover the names of the railway stations represented.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

Competitors are required to write clearly in ink beneath each picture the name of the station they believe it represents, fill in their names and addresses in the space provided, cut out the page, and keep it until further instructions appear in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

First look at the example. You will see that the picture shows a star and a cross. The correct answer is STARCROSS.

EXAMPLE:



STARCROSS.

A PRIZE OF £500

will be awarded to the competitor from whom we receive a complete set of pictures with all the names correct.

Prizes of £200, £100, and £50, . .
Ten £5 Pathephones (with records), and
One Hundred Prizes of £1 each . .

will be paid to the competitors who send in respectively the next most correct lists.

READ THESE CONDITIONS CAREFULLY.

1. Write the name of each station clearly in ink. One name only is allowed under each picture.
2. No alterations may be made in the names. If you have made a mistake, cross out the word and write it afresh. When you have filled up your list cut it out and keep it till we tell you what to do with it.
3. Competitors may send in as many complete series of pictures as they please, but each complete series will be judged independently. Sets must be fastened together in the top left-hand corner.
4. The prize of £500 will be paid to the competitor from whom the Editor receives a complete series of pictures with all the names correct of the actual stations as represented. If no competitor sends in a correct list the prize of £500 will go to the sender of the most nearly correct list. In the event of ties the prizes will be divided.
5. The Editor of the ROYAL will not be responsible for the loss or non-delivery of any attempt, and proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of receipt or delivery.
6. No member of the staff of the ROYAL MAGAZINE may enter for this competition.
7. Only the names of railway stations found in Pearson's List of Railway Stations will be admitted. This list is obtainable for 3d. through any newsagent or bookstall, or it will be sent post free for three penny stamps by The Publisher, Room 24, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.
8. Competitors must agree to abide by these conditions, and the Editor's decision is in every respect final.

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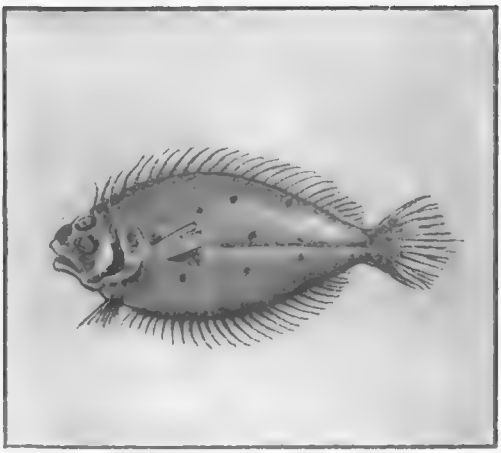
FIRST SET OF PICTURE PUZZLES (Nos. 1—6).

1. .....



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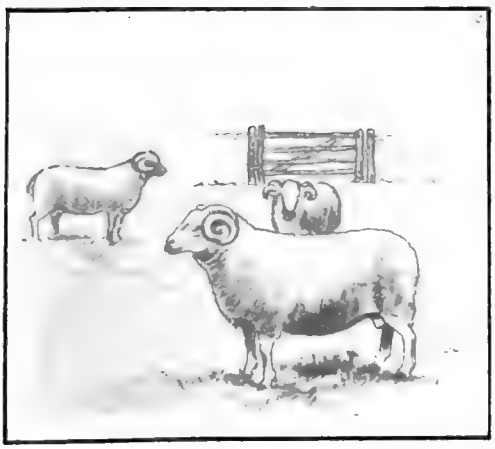
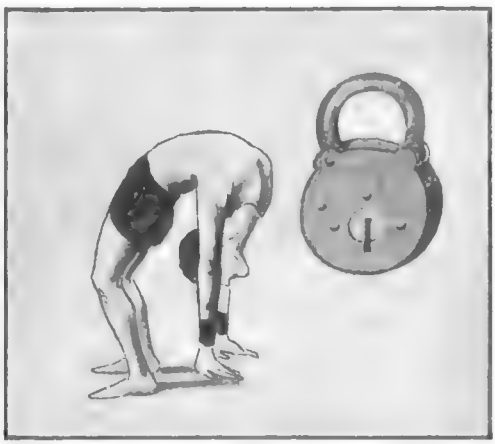


3. .....



4. .....

5. .....

6. .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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Turn back a page if you want £1000.

JAMES IN OPPOSITION

The Story of a Business Friendship.

By William Freeman.

I.

When old Candray, of Candray & Oates, the big provision dealers, got his baronetcy, the people who knew said that he ought to be satisfied. Oates, his partner, was one of them. Oates didn't want a title for himself, and had no son to inherit it. His chief interests were a little cautious golf and his daughter, concerning whose modern ideas he was unsympathetic and sceptical.

Old Candray was different. He went to his offices daily by the 9.31, watched the rise and fall of the markets as though his existence depended upon their movements, and wrote disapproving letters to James, who had lately left Balliol to pay a round of visits among expensive and frivolous friends.

James was an amiable young man in whom there was no guile, but he lacked that genius for concentrated attention to detail which had made his father famous, and he voted the provision trade "stuffy." So matters continued until a day came when the stern parent spake his mind.

Nemesis arrived. Her coming, one might say, synchronised with that of James himself. He had called at the offices of the firm to drop a delicate hint or so concerning the nebulous state of his banking account. His father, leaning back in his chair, spake.

"Look here," he said, "I've had enough of it. *Enough of it!*"

James, awaiting a clue, nervously flicked a wisp of cheese-cloth from his coat.

"You're speaking of the smell of bacon? I always thought it a pity to have the yards at the back."

"I'm speaking of the life you're leading."

"Oh, but I'm fit enough!" James protested. "And—well, what are we going to do about this bally old over-draft?"

Old Candray banged the roll-top desk.

"Do? In future you'll earn your own living. I've been talking it over with Mr. Oates. Possibly you met him in the lift on your way up?"

"Bluff old bounder with a bow-fronted waistcoat and early-Georgian whiskers?"

"Er—yes. He agrees with me that the youth of to-day need training."

"Hang it, but I knocked out Billy Rufford—*the* Billy Rufford—in the third round, you know!"

"I speak of business, not of sport. I have come to a definite decision. It is this. You will be sent to a town in which there is

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already a branch of Candray's. As Mr. James, you will be given a fully-stocked provision business and a reserve capital of a hundred pounds. If at the end of six months you are able to prove to the satisfaction of my accountant that you have made a profit, despite the opposition, you will be given a partnership in the firm. Otherwise I shall leave you entirely to your own devices. I need hardly add that no one save ourselves and Mr. Oates will have an inkling of the arrangement."

"I suppose," said James at last, breaking the silence, "I may engage assistance?"

"Certainly."

"And I may select any town in which we've a branch?"

Old Candray hesitated.

"With one exception—Bunchester."

"Why not Bunchester?"

"The place is comparatively small and dull. I have no wish to be unduly severe. After the life of—er—cultured dissipation to which you are accustomed"—(James reflected on his meeting with Billy Rufford, and smiled grimly)—"you would find life in such a place impossible." Old Candray took up his hat.

"I have now to see a man connected with the date trade. I hear that this year's crop is likely to prove a failure. The matter is serious. Within twenty minutes you may anticipate my return. You have until then to make up your mind."

He laid a printed list of the firm's two hundred branches before his son, and moved with dignity from the room.

James, his brain at one moment a blank, and at the next a battleground of emotions, gazed at the list. A certain native and inherited obstinacy—possibly the only thing he was to inherit—finally remained in possession of the stricken field. At old Candray's reappearance he rose to his feet.

"Well?"

"The conditions are accepted—provided I am allowed to go to Bunchester."

For an instant they faced one another obstinately. Then the Napoleon of the canned-pork market yielded.

"So be it. You shall go to Bunchester. Let me know when you are ready, and I will arrange accordingly."

II.

James, alighting at Chifford Junction, walked briskly to his new sphere of activity, otherwise Number 17 King George's Parade. Opposite him the fascia of Messrs. Candray and Oates glittered defiance in the sunlight. Over James' shop the local sign-painter was now putting the final touches to the Bunchester Supply Association, Proprietor, John James, and wondering if he would have to wait long for his money. If he had known that he was to be paid from the half-yearly dividends of Messrs. Candray & Oates, he would have fallen from his ladder with astonishment. Within, the carpenters and French polishers had already done their ar matic best, and the shop itself was now impassable with crates and cases.

A terrifically energetic youth, with a freckled face, awaited James' arrival. He had been chosen from the applicants produced by an advertisement in the *Bunchester Comet* chiefly on account of his alleged experience and the heart-warming capacity of his smile.

James walked in took off the coat of his two-guinea-made-to-measure-West-End-Fit-guaranteed suit, rolled up his sleeves, and put on a white apron. Hammer and pincers in hand, he addressed the freckled-faced one.

"Nokes, my ally, we're here to make Bunchester hum."

"Yes-sir!"

"Put the ticket in the window—the one that says that the first customer who spends over five shillings and under a pound will have his money returned, results to be announced in Saturday's *Comet*—and then help me with this case of peaches."

Bunchester is not a large place, but it is growing, and competition for the custom of new residents is great. James himself canvassed zealously. It was on the doorstep of "Mon Repos," in Sandringham Avenue that he first encountered Mr. Whipstaff, local manager of Messrs. Candray & Oates.

Mr. Whipstaff, lately promoted from Rotherhithe, had a nasal voice, a domineering manner, and a chin that projected like the toe of an American-made boot, with a welt of aggressive jawbone. He had an unlimited faith in himself, and unlimited contempt for most other people. He was also casual with his aitches.

They met on the tiled forecourt in front of the door.

"The weather," said James pleasantly, "is warm for the time of year."

"Rot!" returned Mr. Whipstaff. "We'd 'ail only the day before yesterday."

The door was opened by an elderly lady.

"G'mornin'," said Mr. Whipstaff fluently. "Jus' looked round fr'm Candray 'n' Oates. Special lines—Can'fornian plums at five-'arf; C'nadian cheddar, sev'npence; bes' fresh

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butter, one-'n'-three; sultanas, fine, bold fruit, fi'pence——"

He paused for breathing exercises.

"And now," said the elderly lady amiably, "I think it's the other young gentleman's turn. Where does he come from?"

"The new Stores," replied James, "and I am happy to inform you that we are stocking an excellent supply of the newest goods, including Californian plums at fivepence, Canadian cheddar at sixpence-ha'penny, best fresh butter at one-and-two, and sultanas, which are bold to the point of recklessness, at fourpence-ha'penny."

"God bless my soul!" said the elderly lady, "with an Oxford accent, too. This competition is terrible!"

It was terrible, insomuch that it marked the beginning of war to the knife. James booked a small order. Mr. Whipstaff glowering murderously, turned on his heel. At the gate he paused:

"Got a motor-cycle?" he inquired, contemptuously indiscreet.

James shook his head.

"I 'ave," said Mr. Whipstaff. He sped back to the shop for it, previously putting in a word with Pawkins of the cycle-shop, an especial crony, lest James should be inspired to hire a machine.

James, on the other hand, went to the railway station. There, for one day only and at ruinous expense, he engaged Bunchester's solitary taxicab. His subsequent tour in search of custom was a social, if not a financial, triumph. *En route* he passed Mr. Whipstaff grappling with a tyre which had punctured in three places, and Mr. Whipstaff's comments, as he looked up and encountered James' mildly benevolent glance, may not be adequately rendered in cold type.

But in the days that followed, James discovered that a general inkling of the provision trade does not necessarily pave the way to brilliant success. Customers demanded articles of which Candray's had the sole agency, and were angry because he didn't keep them.

The whirlwind energy of Nokes culminated in his falling from a pyramid of sugar-boxes, from the apex of which he was putting totally-superfluous hooks in the ceiling. James, unpacking eggs in the yard, heard an ominous crash, followed by a still more ominous silence. He found the freckled one with his head against the side window, which had been starred as by the impact of a large stone.

James revived him and sent him home. There he stayed for a week, when an aged aunt called to explain that if it was all the same to James, 'Enery, otherwise Nokes, was wishful to leave.

A second advertisement secured the services of a pale young man with wide-open, honest eyes, who had never left home before, but who took to the business as a kitten takes to milk.

III.

Up to this time James had kept sedulously away from the windows of his rival. No such foolish sentiment troubled Mr. Whipstaff who, from a daily inspection of James' stock, finally entered the shop. His face was cheerful. Everything (James gathered) was forgiven and forgotten. All he asked was change for a sovereign and James' candid opinion upon a case of claret of whose merits Mr. Whipstaff was doubtful.

It was palpably the hand of friendship, and James accepted it. He crossed the road, inspected the claret, pronounced the opinion, and incidentally made the acquaintance of Miss Elsie Tritton.

Miss Tritton was the young lady cashier. She sat in a small mahogany inclosure and handed out change as required. To most of the customers she was as much a part of the Stores as the advertisements on the walls or the dried fruits on the counter. To James, however, she presented herself immediately as a goddess indifferently disguised in a cheap black dress. There is no way of accounting for these things—they simply happen. James, of course, dissembled, and merely bowed stiffly when Mr. Whipstaff introduced "Miss Tritton—a noo-comer, but doin' remarkably well."

After that, James came over to the Stores fairly frequently. Possibly this showed weakness, but in some directions James was weak. It was not, however, until some Wednesdays afterwards that he met Miss Tritton in her unofficial capacity.

James was seated on the stile in Windmill Lane, morosely flicking the heads off the nettles in the ditch, when Miss Tritton, passing along the footpath, entered his field of vision.

She was wearing a frilly blouse that showed a triangle of white throat. Violets and rosebuds, pale through much washing (though the fact was hidden from James' masculine intelligence), patterned it daintily.

A slip of paper, covered with figures, blew to her feet. She stooped to examine it.

"Mine," said James.

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James, of course, dissembled, and merely bowed stiffly when Mr. Whipstaff introduced "Miss Tritton—a noo-comer, but doin' remarkably well."

"I'm sorry!" she apologised, and gave it to him.

"Don't be—it isn't worth it. The fact is," said James, suddenly and disconcertingly confidential, "butter and cheese are going cheap to-day, but the Bunchester Supply Association is going cheaper. The best-laid plans have a trick of leading one to the neighbourhood of the Bankruptcy Court. Why do I hint of such things to a rival firm? Because I should explode if I didn't hint of them to someone, and a charwoman's no confidante."

"Oh, *don't!*" exclaimed Miss Tritton.

"Until a week or so ago," pursued James, regarding the decapitated nettles, "I had an impression that I was at least making both ends meet. They don't meet. If it wasn't for young Fetchley, bless his honest soul——"

Miss Tritton looked up from the pattern she was drawing on the soft earth with the ferrule of her sunshade.

"Of course," she said jerkily, "you know that he used to be with Candray's?"

James stared.

"But I understood—why did he leave you, anyway?"

"I think," said Miss Tritton, "you'd better ask Mr. Whipstaff that." She made a movement to go.

James swung himself off the stile.

"Are you going back to the village?"

"No—to Chifford."

"But you'll be coming back the same way. Unless," added James conscientiously, "you think of travelling *via* Siberia and the North-West Provinces?"

"Geography," said Miss Tritton, "was never my strong point. Good-bye."

James watched the frilly blouse until it turned an angle of the field, and then, impelled by new-born suspicions, sped back to the shop. There the suspicions instantly became certainties. The till yawned open and empty. There was a gap on the counter, where the most expensive and portable dainties were stacked, which smote the eye like a blow. On James' desk was a note, kept in position by a three-pound pot of jam.

"*Dear Sir*," James read, "*I shant be*

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back no More as I am starten for Canada To-night." On the other side was written: "*To Mr. James,*" and beneath, adding insult to injury, the crude drawing of a mug.

James sat down to think things over. He was aroused by the Bunchester Church clock booming "four." He locked up the shop and went out again. With a vague idea that he might find Miss Tritton somewhere in the neighbourhood of the stile, he returned thither. Instead, he found Mr. Whipstaff. He was not to know that Miss Tritton had fled chiefly because she had seen the manager in the distance.

"Fine day!" said Mr. Whipstaff genially.

"Very!" James agreed. He indicated the stile. "Won't you sit down for a moment? I've one or two small matters to talk over."

Mr. Whipstaff, his beady eyes on James, and his chin projecting sharply, sat down.

"I'm told," began James, "that the lad Fetchley, whom I engaged as a new hand, had, as a matter of fact, been with you before."

"That's so," said Mr. Whipstaff. "If you'd made inquiries, same as any other business man would 'a' done, you'd 'a' found out as much for yourself."

"Why did he leave?"

"There was a triflin' shortage of seventeen-pun'-twelve," said Mr. Whipstaff complacently. "'Is uncle paid up, but 'e won't do it again."

"And you knew that he was robbing me?"

Mr. Whipstaff smiled.

"One gets inklins'—a 'int dropped 'ere and there. Not, of course, that you've any ground for action against us. If you 'adn't spent so much of your time in my shop——"

"You said nothing."

"Competition's keen, and you was in the way." A memory of the incident of the taxi-cab brought a scowl to his face. "Blighted aristocratical noosance!" said Mr. Whipstaff, *sotto-voce*.

"Get off that stile," commanded James in a level voice.

"Why?" demanded Mr. Whipstaff.

"I'm going to lick you," said James, still levelly.

"*Wot!*" said Mr. Whipstaff, quite incredulous. Nevertheless, he stood up.

Two minutes later he was disentangling himself from the mud at the bottom of the ditch.

"Any more?" inquired James.

Mr. Whipstaff's retort was an attempt to grapple at close quarters. He had a hazy idea that if he could only get the head of James comfortably in chancery, he could pummel him adequately and at leisure. Yet once more the ditch was to be his portion, this time accompanied by some slight shedding of blood.

"Any more?" James inquired for the second time.

"My nex' visit," said Mr. Whipstaff, nursing an eye which was assuming the hue of an over-ripe plum, "will be to the p'lice-station."

"Righto!" assented James. "You might tell the sergeant-in-charge to expect me a little later."

Refreshed and invigorated he went back to the shop, discovered that Mr. Fetchley's defalcations amounted in all to about twenty-four pounds, and then, since his char-lady was out for the day, made himself some tea.

IV.

Though he wanted to see Miss Tritton—badly—to enter the Stores again was out of the question, and she, though James did not realise it, avoided him sedulously. When they did meet it was by the purest accident, at the doors of the post-office. Though dusk had fallen, James perceived at once that she was paler and thinner; also that she had been crying. That this last should be allowed to happen seemed to him a frightful reflection upon our boasted civilisation. Under the shock, he forgot everything save the primal duty of comforting her.

"What's wrong?" he asked gently.

Miss Tritton moved to where the shadow of a portico made it possible to dabble one's eyes inconspicuously.

He caught two words—"the sack."

"Why?"

She hesitated.

"Mr. Whipstaff found out that it was I who told you about Fetchley. It annoyed him even more than falling off the stile and cutting his eye, and that was bad enough."

"It was," agreed James. He perceived that, for reasons of his own, Mr. Whipstaff had not called at the police-station.

"I leave on Tuesday," continued Miss Tritton quickly, "and in disgrace. And my father wanted me to spend at least six months studying the provision-business, and I can't imagine what he'll say. And—and that's all."

"Pardon me," said James, "but it isn't. There are several other items on the programme. Suppose we stroll further along—one can talk better where the demand for halfpenny stamps is less insistent."

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She walked on listlessly, without comment.

"Look here," said James, staring fixedly ahead, "I'm appallingly in need of help in the business. With some sort of adequate support I could warm it up to a success. I'm sure of it. And you're in need of a berth. Couldn't we go into partnership—you in the desk, I behind the counter? I'm not often afflicted with bright ideas, but——"

"It's very kind of you," said Miss Tritton, "but absolutely impossible. *Absolutely*."

"Why? I've still some crumbs of capital left, ditto stock, ditto experience, ditto ambition."

"No," replied Miss Tritton definitely.

They were now opposite a depôt of Sox, Cash Chemists, where the electric lamps sizzled, blue and dazzling. James, glancing downwards, perceived that the tears had gone, and that Miss Tritton was blushing. It had never occurred to him that she did blush, or, alternatively (as the lawyers say), that any human being could blush so adorably. It was an even greater revelation than the frilly blouse with the V-shaped opening.

Mr. Whipstaff's retort was an attempt to grapple at close quarters. He had a hazy idea that if he could only get the head of James comfortably in chancery, he could pummel him adequately and at leisure.

They exchanged the depôt of Sox, Cash Chemists, for the comparative twilight of the Bunchester coffee-tavern.

"Good-bye!" said Miss Tritton.

"What train do you think of catching on Tuesday?" asked James casually.

"The two-fifteen."

"I've thought of an alternative."

"I know—the three-forty-two."

"Not at all. You might marry me."

"Is this," asked Miss Tritton, in an unsteady voice, "m-meant for a j-joke?"

James shook his head. They were now entering into the darkness of the railway-arch.

"I'm desperately in earnest." He caught her hands, and spoke in a voice that was altogether different. "I love you. I've loved you from the first minute I saw you. Elsie, will you? *Will* you?"

Her answer was a sob, and then a whisper—an interrupted whisper.

V.

Just three months later, Sir Richard Candray, Baronet, was aroused from his contemplation of *The Wholesale Grocers' Review* by the entrance of a clerk.

"Mr. James desires to see you, sir."

"Send him in," said old Candray.

Enter James. He laid before his father a sheet of paper neatly covered with figures. They revealed a clear profit on the half-

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year's trading of thirty-one pounds eleven shillings and fourpence. The thing was plain enough for him who ran to read—and Sir Richard rarely ran. Gentlemen of five-foot-six, who weigh fifteen stone, have other hobbies.

"H'm!" Sir Richard glanced at the writing, which was feminine. "Who's responsible for this statement?"

"My wife, sir?"

"*Who?*"

"— Formerly Miss Tritton, cashier at Candrays' Bunchester Branch."

Old Candray's lips twitched, but he said nothing. He held the theory that any form of emotion meant the expenditure of nervous energy that might be better employed.

"Ever met any of her people?" he asked at last.

James shook his head.

"They live near London. I'm going to see her father to-day."

At this moment the door opened, and Oates glanced in.

"Hullo!" he began, and was backing out when Candray stopped him.

"This young fool here is my son. Queer that you've not met before, ain't it?"

"Very!" said Oates, and shook hands.

"He's just got married," added old Candray, scowling.

"That's odd." Oates turned to James. "My daughter—always a flighty hussy—has done the same. Packed her off *incog.* to one of the branches to pick up something of our methods, and hanged if she doesn't go into partnership with the proprietor of a rival firm!"

He went off into a series of senile chuckles. Across the face of Sir Richard there flickered a faint smile—the smile of one whose plans have been well and truly laid.

James gripped the back of a chair to steady himself. He was still gripping it when Elsie came in.

"Dad and I have been explaining things," she said cheerfully.

She kissed her father. Then, solemnly, she kissed old Candray.

Then, with an air of assured and complete proprietorship, she crossed the room and kissed James.

WANTED—£1000!

The Young Youth speaks:

If I had got a thousand pounds
I'd buy a scrumptious car,
And gaily crank the engine up
And drive it near and far;
The gasping hooter should emit
Excruciating sounds—
But ah! I haven't got a thousand pounds!

If I had got a thousand pounds
I'd squander it away
On necklaces and bracelets for
Bewitching Maisie May;
She dances at the Jollity
With little kicks and bounds—
But all her boys must have a thousand pounds.

If I had got a thousand pounds
I'd vie with fearful dogs,
Who dress in spats and opera hats
And petrifying togs;
I'd wear the loudest hunting coats
To scare the panting hounds
If only I had got—

(*Well, why don't you turn to p. 170 and see how to get it?*—ED. R.M.)

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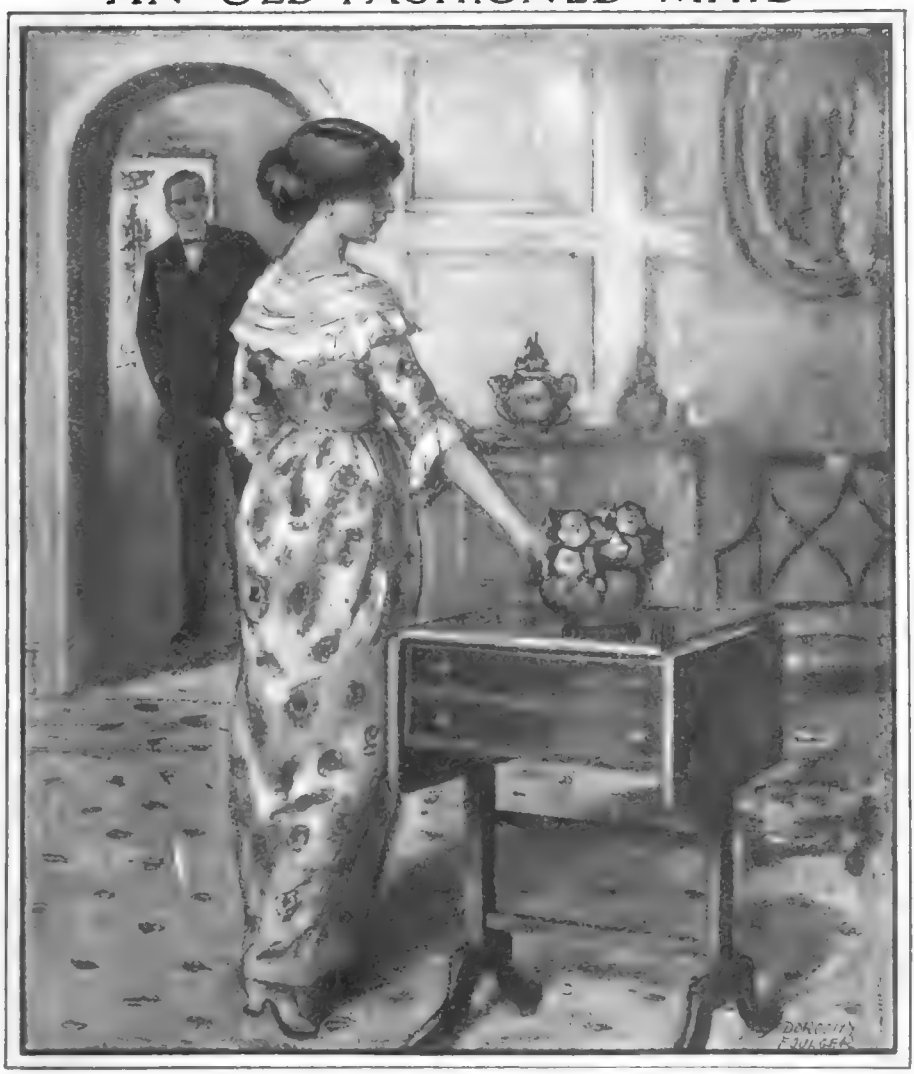
AN OLD-FASHIONED MAID



There's a sweet little maiden, as shy as a mouse,
Who lives in a quaint little old fashioned house,
In an old-fashioned street that runs up hill and down,
In a trim little, prim little old fashioned town

In a gown of her great, great, great-granny's brocade,
All the new-fashioned maidens she throws in the shade,
With her neat little, sweet little old-fashioned ways,
Which belong to the dear, vanished, old-fashioned days.

And, though some of her sex may consider it wrong,
She's going to promise, before very long,
To "love" and to "honour," and even "obey,"
In her dear little, queer little old-fashioned way!

Ada Leonora Harris

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A NEW AND THRILLING SERIES.

Harry Sintzenich.

HANDSHAKES *With* DEATH

EIGHT HOURS ON A COW-CATCHER THROUGH THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.

Written by Margaret Chute, from the narrative of Harold Sintzenich, film-journalist, working for Kinemacolor Ltd.

In order to avoid confusion or mistakes later on, let me state—here and now—that I am not, never have been, and probably never shall be a film-actor. In one sense, therefore, I have been lured into this series under false pretences. Still, I am a film-journalist, or cinema-operator, as it may please you to call me, and in pursuit of my profession I run up against thrills nearly every day, which are sometimes worse than those encountered by players. An actor can keep moving, while an operator has to stand still and wait for whatever is coming his way, be it a cyclone, a run-away fire-engine, a bucking broncho, or an infuriated mob!

Not long ago I returned to England—my native country—after a tour through Jamaica, British Columbia, and Canada lasting fourteen months. During that time I was busy collecting natural-colour films for the Kinemacolor Company, and my adventures were many and varied.

They included a forest fire, made to order, which was ruined by a fearful snowstorm; a shipwreck; two railway accidents; several weeks spent with the Siwash Indians; a sting from a six-inch scorpion, in Jamaica, and three doses of malaria. But the worst experience of the whole bunch was the wild ride I took through the Canadian Rockies, on the front of a cow-catcher, with the temperature below zero!

Ugh! I shudder now when I think about it. Altogether, I made four journeys, lasting eight hours each, and the films taken on the first three trips were useless through snow and other climatic drawbacks. So the final journey was made, on the coldest day I have ever experienced, and the result was a successful set of pictures, though I nearly departed quietly to another sphere through exposure and accidents.

This is what happened, as far as I can remember. In order to get really effective pictures of scenery in the Canadian Rockies, it was necessary to fix my camera on the cow-catcher, which forms the front part of every engine in the United States and Canada. As the camera was useless without me behind it, arrangements had to be made for a floor of some sort on which I could stand.

A wooden platform, about one foot and a half broad, was placed across the cow-catcher, with two narrow pieces projecting forward from each side to hold the front legs of the camera-tripod. (It was necessary to have two cameras in use at the same time, so that the pictures might be duplicated, in case of accidents.) On this narrow gang-plank, flanked by my cameras, I had to stand for eight hours on end. It was a tricky business, because the trains travel at a great pace, and it was impossible to fix a hand-rail, or give me anything to hold on to—except the front of the engine!

At 7.30 one freezing morning—the thermometer was well below zero—I arrived at

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As I hung there, with my legs dangling, I looked sideways, and saw that fearful precipice not three yards away. . . . Desperately I released my left hand from the tripod, and flung both arms round the support on my right. (*Page* 182, *col.* 2.)

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the railway station of Revelstoke, B.C., wrapped in sheepskins from head to foot, my face and body being completely covered, with the exception of my eyes and nose. Full of ambition and excitement, I climbed on to my narrow platform and fixed my cameras, which were strapped to the wooden floor. Then the train started on its eight-hour trip to Field—and my adventures began.

It is hard to describe the weird feeling one gets while travelling on the front of an engine. I felt I was standing on air, and, as the ground rushed away beneath my feet, there came an almost uncontrollable impulse to fling myself forward to meet the flying stones and earth which appeared to be coming upwards right in my face.

After the first few minutes that awful sensation passed, and I was left to the exciting game of sticking to my tiny platform, securing good pictures, and fighting against death by freezing from the intense cold.

The atmosphere was bad enough when the train was still, but once the speed increased till it reached sixty miles an hour, the air was like a knife that cut and cut through my sheepskins to my bones.

Icicles formed all round the helmet covering my face and ears; icicles, too, covered several parts of the engine. At one time I felt I could never get through the journey; then I looked at my cameras and the flying scenery, and decided I would have a jolly good try whatever happened. From side to side of my platform I moved as swiftly as I dared, turning first one handle, then the other.

As we tore round corners, at a terrific pace, I was flung backwards and forwards, and found myself lying flat on the platform, several times, clinging to the legs of a camera-tripod. After a time, my feet and legs became absolutely numb. It was rather a relief, for I forgot I possessed feet at all, and devoted all my attention to my work.

Six times we stopped on that journey, and the engine-driver on each occasion kept me alive by producing boiling tea. Staring at me and my machines, he drawled:

"Say, where's the use, sonny? Give it up—jest give it up! You'll freeze, sure thing, if you don't!"

The route lay through mountains all the way, but in one part, the railway track consisted of a shelf, literally carved in the mountain side. On the right, the huge mountains rose sheer out of sight; on the left, from the very edge of the track, they fell, forming a ghastly precipice, hundreds of feet deep. When we reached this weird, shelf-like stretch, I began to feel nervous.

Half fascinated, I was "turning" and thinking at the same time: "What a hateful place for a fall!" And just then the line curved suddenly to the right. I wasn't watching it, because my eyes were on the precipice below, so the sudden swerve caught me off my guard. With a roar and a jolt the train swayed to the right, jerked the camera handle from my cold fingers, and hurled me forward, off my platform, towards the track. . . .

As I fell, I flung out my arms instinctively, and, Providence being kind, they just reached the two camera-tripod legs. My fingers closed round these wooden supports, and through my brain flashed the thought: "I'm still alive!" But the great question was how long could I hope to *remain* alive in such an awful position? There was no means of communicating with the driver, and he couldn't see me from his high cab behind the cow-catcher. So I clung to the tripod-legs, and thought hard and fast—"What can I do?"

Meanwhile the train raced on, and I was losing some of the best scenery, to say nothing of my danger. It was ridiculous and awful! But having managed to clutch the tripods, I felt I was *meant* to live, so I began a perilous climb to safety. As I hung there, with my legs dangling, I looked sideways, and saw that fearful precipice not three yards away. . . . It would be so easy to slip over, and yet——

Desperately I released my left hand from the tripod, and flung both arms round the support on my right, for I had a better grip in that position.

Slowly, and very painfully, I drew myself upwards—being swung violently from side to side all the time—until I was able to rest my feet on the wooden bars of the cow-catcher. For a few seconds I gave my arms a rest; then I started dragging my feet up, one at a time, to the platform above, until at last I scrambled back into my place—dazed and shaking, as the train rushed on through the mountains. . . .

When we reached Field, my feet, hands, and body were absolutely numb, and I was so cold that I could feel *nothing* at all. So I was carried to the hotel, my sheepskins were dragged off, and a boiling bath, together with hot whisky, brought me back to life again.

A sleep, lasting fourteen hours, concluded an adventure that will not easily be forgotten—by me!

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SWANK.

The Story of a Dual Deception.

By Jessie Pope.

"I call it a ghastly idea," cried Letty.

"No doubt," retorted her step-mother. "Any addition to your simple duties would naturally be repugnant to you."

"It's not *that!* You know very well I don't mind how hard I work in the house, or what I do for you and the children, but I do think that—that a *lodger* is the l-l-limit!" Here Letty's voice broke, her soft, white chin puckered, her hazel eyes brimmed, and two tears rolled down her flushed cheeks.

"Very well," returned her step-mother coldly, "since that is your decision, we may as well all go into the workhouse at once."

"But why can't we go on like this?" said Letty, mopping her eyes and swallowing a great lump in her throat. "We've made our money do all right so far. I don't mind screwing and scraping, but I loathe the thought of having to wait on this dreadful young yokel. It's really too much to expect me to cook for a *grocer's* son!" and the slender girl dropped down in a chair and bowed her small dark head in her hands.

"As I remarked," replied her step-mother, standing over her, "you naturally loathe the thought of extra work. Providence sends me this admirable means of supplementing the pittance your unfortunate father left to keep us all, yet I must write and tell my friend, Benjamin Polson—and I am not ashamed of calling him my friend even though he is a country grocer—that we cannot accommodate young Samuel because of your wicked selfishness and false pride."

Letty knew she wasn't selfish, but her conscience did feel a trifle sensitive in the matter of pride. Almost from babyhood she had shown a bias for "the best people," and though, as time passed, she developed one of the sweetest dispositions in the world, she was not a little addicted to swank.

Still, when it came to a clash of wills, the step-mother's always scored, as it did in this case, and Letty gave way more easily because just at this time a new and altogether delightful matter occupied a large share of her attention. For the postman one morning had placed in her eager hand a delicately-scented, gold-lettered invitation to a garden-party at the Charringtons' house in Chelsea on the 6th.

Gwen Charrington had been a schoolgirl chum of Letty's palmy days, and as the austere step-mother disapproved of continuing the connection between rich and poor, Letty kept her own counsel about the invitation, accepted it on the quiet, and determined to go to that garden-party or die in the attempt. It seemed, however, as if the latter alternative was the only one open to her, when her step-mother coldly announced that she had arranged for the embryo grocer to take up his quarters as lodger on the very 6th to which Letty had been looking forward with any amount of suspense mingled with excitement.

But what was the good of making a fuss when she could not explain the reason of her objection? Letty bowed her head to the inevitable, and seized the first opportunity of rushing up to her bedroom to have a real good cry at the cruelty of fate in general and step-mothers in particular.

She sat down on the side of the bed. Her cupboard door stood open—in fact, one of the hinges was missing—and through the gap her tragic hazel eyes caught a glimpse of

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what appeared to be a bit of the summer sky, but which was the diaphanous blue summer frock provided by Gwen from her own wardrobe for her impecunious friend to wear on the great occasion. For a week past Letty had been adjusting that frock to her slim figure in the sma' wee hours by candlelight, and times out of number had she set on her dark curls the saucy tulle cap with its tall white plume, which put the finishing touch to a captivating costume.

And now it was all off—for how could she get away for the afternoon on the very day when she must be doing extra housework and shopping for the reception and entertainment of the loathsome lodger?

At this point of her meditations a scheme flashed through her head of such brilliance as to partake of the nature of an inspiration—a scheme which, if successfully carried out, would give her at least three hours at the garden-party and win the approval of her austere relative at one and the same time.

At the back of some of the fine old Chelsea houses there lies, as everybody knows, a slum-like district of poorer dwellings, where rows of market stalls flank the curb, and provide a cheap shopping centre for the humble residents. Both Letty and her mother knew by experience the advantages this market offered to the housewife who was not too proud to carry her purchases home with her, and by degrees a plan ripened in Letty's fertile brain whereby she could combine pleasure and business on the afternoon of the 6th, and nobody be any the wiser.

Letty suffered a suspense that was almost unendurable when, with a resigned expression and in a sad, quiet voice, she suggested getting the housework done early on the day of the lodger's advent, so that she could devote the afternoon to cheap shopping in town. The frosty expression on her stepmother's face melted to one of approval as she remarked:

"Yes, it is a good idea. There will be your fare, but if you are careful how you go to work, you ought to be able to save that twice over. I don't expect he will be here before seven, and you must be back in good time to see about his tea."

"Oh, yes," replied Letty. "I'll manage that all right," and she dropped her eyes to hide their stealthy sparkle.

"There will be lots of things to get," continued the elder lady, almost genially, "and you'd better bring a mild-cured haddock with you. He'll be accustomed to a relish for his tea, and country men don't like London bacon. However, I'll make out a list before you go, or you'll forget half the things."

So far so good. Letty agreed to everything with a sigh of relief and a submissive smile, and, fortunately, because

Not even the tenderest heart and next one's own
Knows half the reason why we smile or sigh,

her step-mother was duly gratified by this submission to her wishes.

Neither did she guess, when her stepdaughter, ostentatiously armed with a string bag, presented herself on the afternoon of the great day for final instructions, that her shabby waterproof and woollen cap were but the trappings of hidden glories.

"I'm glad," she remarked, "that you've the sense to wear your waterproof—these fine afternoons often turn to rain; besides, you get better prices if you are not too well-dressed. Good-bye; don't be late, because I feel one of my headaches coming on."

Fortune favours the brave, and it favoured Letty with an empty waiting-room at the station. There were ten minutes to spare before the train arrived and much to be done. First, she threw aside the waterproof concealing the gossamer blue gown—a Paris model which had never suited the less-favoured Gwen, but was absolutely "it" on Letty. Then she carefully peeled off the woollen cap, which hid the close-fitting tulle confection underneath, and drew from her sleeve the long white plume, which she skilfully pinned at a ravishing angle at one side.

There was just room for the cap in the pocket of the waterproof, but what about the string bag! That token of sordid economy *must* be concealed—but where? The signal was down, the train overdue, as Letty, once more inspired, packed it safely away in the bosom of her gown, threw her waterproof lightly over her arm, and emerged on to the platform—a little brown moth no longer, but a beautiful butterfly feverishly eager for her first flutter.

She saw admiration in the eye of the guard as he obsequiously opened the door of a first-class carriage, and, bowing with a gracious dignity, she entered, devoutly hoping the fact that she had a third-class ticket might never be revealed this side the grave.

But fortune favoured her all the way, and she leant back luxuriously, lost in a rainbow daydream of anticipation, which embraced all kinds of possible romances; in fact,

["SWANK" continued overleaf.]

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before the terminus was reached she had snubbed an over-ardent Ambassador, scored off a Cabinet Minister, turned a dozen titled ladies green with envy, and last, but not least, had inspired an undying passion in the breast of a high-born and fascinating young man with an eyeglass.

As a spur to her imagination, she would every now and then start to her feet, to gaze on her reflection in the strips of mirror placed under the racks for that purpose, and giggle in sheer delight at what she saw there.

So new and delightful was the sensation of looking really smart, that when a loafer at the terminus suggested a taxi, she very nearly nodded her consent. However, prudence prevailed; a motor-bus served her purpose, and landed her *chic* as ever and with the shilling in her pocket, at a discreet distance from the Charringtons' wide marble doorsteps. Hardly able to believe that she was really on the threshold of her social Paradise, she pulled the great bell. The doors opened with such magical swiftness that Letty hoped her little start of astonishment passed unnoticed by the two tall footmen who had done the trick.

From that moment, past and future were effaced for Letty; she forgot her stepmother, the grey drudgery of the life behind her, and the cheap shopping and the lodger in front. She lived every moment for all it was worth, and nobody in that old, spacious, flower-decked Chelsea garden had a better time.

Many a girl has found to her chagrin that her fine feathers, which looked so smart at home before she started, fade to insignificance by contrast with her more brilliant competitors at the party. If Letty's chance had depended on her appearance alone, she might have suffered a similar experience, but it was the sunshine of her charm which made everybody take a fancy to her, and acted as a tonic to even the most *blasé*.

Gwen Charrington's friendship stood the test of a pang of envy. "You look absolutely 'it'", she whispered, as she slipped her arm in Letty's; "the frock suits you tons better than it ever did me. But then you'd look like a fairy princess in any old rag."

"Oh—shut up!" said Letty, squeezing her friend's hand ecstatically. "I'm half off my head with excitement as it is. I'm playing hookey—she doesn't know I've come—but here I am, and I'm going to enjoy myself."

"You *shall!!*" exclaimed Gwen—and she *did;* there was not a shadow of doubt about that.

Mr. Charrington was a successful City merchant, and though he did not know any Ambassadors, his guests included a crowd of "quite the best people," a glorious fact which Letty realised as Gwen led her down the terrace into the garden. This was the world of luxurious leisure far removed from her own, but instead of feeling shy or stupid, she rose to the occasion and scored all along the line. Gwen insisted on introducing her to all the "lions," and the funny part was, it was they who seemed to shine from her reflected glory instead of the other way about.

Admiration grew in the eyes of each new acquaintance, and Letty consumed more *tête-à-tête* ices in an hour than she cared to count. The sun shone, the band played alluringly, and no one in all that smart crowd would have dreamt that the gay and charming girl who got on so well with everybody, carried a serpent in her bosom in the shape of a string bag, and was due to cook the lodger's tea as soon as she got home.

And yet there was something lacking in her joy, for while all the elements of romance were at hand, she chafed with growing impatience because the fairy prince had not yet been presented. He was there right enough, eyeglass and all. She had seen him almost as soon as she came into the garden, and had had her weather eye on him, so to speak, ever since. He was a well-groomed, well-built young man, with a whimsical blue eye, and such a look of gay good humour on his face that Letty experienced an inward thrill of pleasure when Mr. Charrington piloted him across the lawn to her side. The introduction was as unintelligible as usual on such occasions, and Letty looked up demurely as their busy host hurried away.

"It sounded like Mr. Apollo," she said, "but I suppose it wasn't."

"Why not?" retorted the fairy prince. "I believe he has made a trip to earth before now to fall in love with a human maiden."

"And fly back to his goddesses again directly afterwards," returned Letty, realising with a little pang how many a true word is spoken in jest.

"Well, anyhow," he replied, "Apollo has been waiting all the afternoon for his chance, while the human maiden has been wasting all her sweetness in other directions."

"Oh, not *all*, there's a little left," laughed Letty, and when she laughed a captivating dimple appeared like magic in either cheek.

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"That's true," he said, his blue eyes laughing back into her hazel ones. "Well, come and have another ice," which showed that he had had his weather eye upon her, too.

They had their ices in a clematis-festooned arbour, while the band played "*Un Peu D'Amour*," and as the golden minutes flew by, though their banter was light and airy and their repartee gay and flippant, there was a fatal arrow in the heart of each.

He was an Oxford man with a pronounced Oxford manner, and Letty loved it. She drew him on to talk about his life, then his ambition, his career, while great names slid easily and familiarly from his tongue. She loved that, too, and felt she would have given all she possessed to belong to his world, to know the people he knew, to lead the pleasure-seeking life of the girls of his set. For one afternoon, anyhow, she would keep her end up and meet him on equal terms. Come what might, he should never know the truth.

So when he asked her to tell him something about herself, she proved equal to the occasion, and began to swank for all she was worth, and presently found herself committed to such flights of fancy as almost took away her breath. But to salve her conscience there was a grain of truth behind it all.

For instance, when she talked about "the orchard at home"—she really alluded to the one scrubby plum tree trained against the scullery wall; her romps with the children and a rocking-horse in the back garden, developed into "riding over the jumps in the paddock"; "the game in the park" was her step-mother's poultry run; and "the rookery," the two crows who sat in the garden fence with an eye to the poultry food.

The fact that she was Gwen Charrington's special friend was, of course, of tremendous assistance, and "Apollo" naturally never doubted these subtle revelations of wealth and position. His easy gullibility led her to describe at some length the private theatricals of their recent house-party with such dexterous imagination that it would have taken a far more critical listener to have guessed that the theatricals consisted of a charade acted by the children, and the house-party, a couple of neighbours who came to guess the word and stopped to supper afterwards.

Personal matters, however, drifted into a heart-to-heart talk. Unconscious of everything but each other they sat in the clematis-festooned arbour till all at once a neighbouring clock struck six silvery chimes and made Letty's heart leap against the string bag in her bosom, as she realised that the blissful hour was over, and cheap shopping and the lodger loomed in front.

"Gracious!" she exclaimed, "I must be off!" adding as an afterthought: "We've got some people coming from the country to-night, and I promised to be back early to entertain them. Good-bye."

But Apollo was not so easily dismissed, and remarking in his candid manner that when *she* went the party was over for *him*, prepared to accompany her at least part of the way. For a moment Letty was nonplussed, but once again fortune favoured her, for while he was making his adieux to their host and hostess she deliberately cut hers, and nipped out of the garden door, while "Apollo" was looking desperately for her in the hall.

Once more slipping the cloak over her pretty frock, and extracting the string bag from its hiding-place, the belated rêveller hurried down the side street which led to the market stalls, and, while the glamour of her golden dream was still upon her, swiftly carried through the business of her cheap shopping with the shrewd eye and the bargaining instinct of the born housewife. In spite of flower-like prettiness and exhilarating charm, Letty was a genius at making half-a-crown go as far as three-and-six, and when she caught the motor-'bus back to the station, her string bag bulged with bargains, with a haddock's tail and a head of celery emerging from the top, for "curb salesmen" are never too generous with their paper.

However, what did it matter?—what did *anything* matter so far as that went?—thought Letty, as with an air of weary dejection, and her lips turning down at the corners she climbed into a third-class carriage at the terminus, slung the string bag up on the opposite rack, and slipped off her waterproof—for she was hot with hurrying. Grey depression clouded the horizon; once more the commonplace suburb was about to engulf her. The future was full of the drudgery of daily duties, yet the new, soft light still glowing in Letty's eyes showed that there is something very pleasant about falling in love, however hopeless it may be.

"It *is* better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all," murmured Letty to herself, and the quotation had hardly left her lips when the carriage door opened and "Apollo" sprang in beside her, just as the train was leaving the station. Out came the dimples in Letty's cheeks—her eyes sparkled

["SWANK" continued overleaf.]

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like stars, for she had forgotten all about the string bag on the opposite rack.

"Hallo!" she said. "Back again from Olympus?"

"Yes," he replied. "The goddesses were jealous of the human maiden so I thought it was no place for me. But I say this *is* luck to find you again."

"Isn't it?" replied Letty. Then she shot a stealthy glance at the rack and reassured herself that even if he saw its degrading burden he would think it belonged to the stout woman who sat just beneath.

"By the way," she added suddenly, "how far are you going?"

"To Crowley. A connection of my pater's, Sir John Pendleton, lives there. Do you know them by any chance?"

"N-no," replied Letty. "I don't know many Crowley people." This was a fact, for though Crowley was her own suburb her acquaintances were limited to a few neighbours.

Certainly she was not on the Pendletons' visiting list.

Her heart sank. The luck had turned with a vengeance. Crowley was her station also. She daren't leave the string bag behind, but she would rather die than let him see her collect it—haddock tail, celery head, and all. In the brain-storm that surged through her mind she heard him eagerly asking her destination, and once more inspiration came to her aid. As he got out at Crowley, she would go on to Brickton, the next station, take the train back to Crowley, and save her reputation at the cost of being half-an-hour late.

"I get out at Brickton," she said simply, "that's one station further on." His face fell, but Letty's spirits revived. Disaster was averted, and once more she could enjoy her Paradise if only for twenty minutes. But "Apollo" grew rather gloomy; the impending parting (she hoped) made his repartee less gay, his captivating smile less frequent. At last he said:

"Look here, I'm not in any hurry, so, if I may, I'll come on to Brickton and see you home."

The colour fled from Letty's cheek; a hunted expression crept in her hazel eye, as she caught the bulging string bag with the tail of it.

"Thanks, awfully," she replied, after a moment's pause, "but the car will be waiting for me at the station."

It was true the electric car would be at the station, if she was lucky enough to catch it—and from that moment her manner changed. She grew cool, almost distant—she really must choke him off though she broke her poor aching heart in the process.

But he was quick enough to take a hint. A barrier seemed to rise between them; the train drew up at Crowley; he held her hand a moment, got out on the platform, raised his hat and was gone.

Letty gripped her lip with her teeth and choked back a rush of tears. So this was the end—she was safe out of the wood at last—and she ought to have been thankful. But that lump rose in her throat not once but many times, when in Brickton waiting-room she donned her waterproof, tucked the white plume up her sleeve, pulled the woollen cap over the tulle toque, and became the little brown moth once more.

The tram was full. No one offered her a seat—there wasn't much chivalry left in Brickton—and she had to stand all the way to Crowley, clutching a strap with one hand and the string bag with the other. She guessed that a scolding awaited her and she guessed rightly, for when she climbed wearily up to the stepmother's darkened bedroom—for the threatened headache had developed—she was greeted with extravagant reproaches and the cheerful tidings that "poor young Samuel Polson had been waiting for his tea for hours."

Letty bit her lip hard, said a few words of sympathy to the peevish sufferer, stopped a free fight in the nursery between her young relations with some cheap sweets she had bought for the purpose, flung a big pinafore over her garden-party frock and ran down to cook the lodger's tea, convinced that she had struck the bed-rock of misery. With the calmness of despair she set the tray with the little brown tea-pot, bread and butter, watercress, jam, cake, and the haddock cooked to a turn. Then, carrying it to the lodger's room, she pushed open the door with her foot.

He was looking out of the window at the dull houses opposite, but turned as she entered. He was "Apollo"!

They stood staring at each other like two statues. He flushed a sudden scarlet to the roots of his curly fair hair, but Letty went very white.

"What are you doing *here!*" she exclaimed fiercely. "You have no right——"

"Oh yes, I have," he said with a little wry smile, "I'm the lodger." And so saying he stepped forward and took the tray from her and set it on to the rickety table. "As far

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as that goes—" he said, "what are *you* doing here, with this tray?"

"I'm the landlady's daughter," she replied simply, and her soft round chin began to pucker ominously.

"The landlady's daughter!" he ejaculated incredulously, "but—the orchard—and the paddock—the car, and——"

"All swank!" faltered Letty brokenly, with a bowed head. "You were an Oxford man—different world to mine—connection of Sir John Pendleton's and all that—wanted to keep my end up somehow."

He gave a queer laugh. "But who *are* you?" she cried suddenly. "I don't understand!"

"I'm Sam Polson," he said, "and an Oxford man in as much as I was a cheap holiday student during vacation. My father's connection with the Pendleton's is a business one—we supply their country place with groceries. I got an invitation to the garden-party because I've got a job in Charrington's wholesale office, and the governor took a fancy to me."

"But *why* did you do it?" cried Letty.

"Swank," he replied, "all swank—because I guessed you belonged to the Charrington's set—and I determined to keep *my* end up too."

Over the rickety table, while the steamy bouquet of the haddock rose between them, their eyes met. Then they sat down and laughed until their sides ached.

All at once Sam Polson pulled himself together.

"But I must go—" he exclaimed. "I absolutely couldn't stop here and let *you* wait on *me!*" And in an impetuous panic he made for the door. But Letty slipped in between and laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"What—not if I wanted to?" she said.

TEA-CUPS FOR TWO.

I hear you call, as seated at my desk,
I labour through the long and sultry hours,
While sunbeams dance upon my study walls,
And through the window steals the scent of flowers.

I hear you call, and flinging down my pen,
Step out amid the sunshine and the trees,
Where crimson roses raise their graceful heads,
And shed their perfume on the scented breeze.

I hear you call, oh! tea-cups, white and blue,
Set on a table 'neath a spreading tree,
With strawberries and other toothsome things
That come to us in summer-time at tea.

I hear you call, and with my heart aglow,
Your tinkling summons hasten to obey,
For, more to me than all the tea and cake—
The girl I love presides behind the tray!

Dorothy Rose.

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IN THE MATTER OF DISTANCE.

A Story of Wasted Anxiety.

By John Barton Oxford.

I.

From Primrose Street to Park Lane, as the crow flies, is perhaps a mile and-a-half, but, if you are judging by standards, social, intellectual, and ethical, a good half the circumference of the earth lies between them.

Primrose Street is noisy, unclean, dilapidated, out-at-the-elbows; Park Lane isn't. In Primrose Street swarms of noisy youngsters, left to their own devices, amuse themselves with hazardous games which entail much swiftness and much keenness of eye to avert their untimely ends beneath the wheels of passing drays. The children of Park Lane—far less in number than those of Primrose Street, although Park Lane is a much longer thoroughfare—amuse themselves much more sanely and safely, and without the shrill, ear-splitting whoops of the Primrose Street-ites, because they are carefully herded by trim and white-capped nursemaids whose keen eyes are solely for their small charges—unless a good-looking young mounted Guardsman strolls along.

A limousine rolled away from No. 1684 Park Lane. It was a six-cylinder limousine of an ultra-expensive make. Its brass glistened; its polished sides shone; there was a big bunch of orchids in the flower-holder just behind the liveried chauffeur's back.

In the limousine were Mr. Malcom Whiteside and his son-in-law, Robert Whittleby. Mr. Robert Whittleby had said just before entering the car:

"To the Docks, William!"

As he said it, Mr. Malcom Whiteside had hitched uneasily on the cushions and turned to look anxiously at a certain window in the big house where the shades were pulled down. He had turned back to say to his son-in-law:

"Now, if I thought Elizabeth——"

Whereupon Mr. Robert Whittleby had interrupted him with:

"Oh, don't let that worry you. The kid's all right. I think myself it's measles, despite what the doctor says. Anyway, it's nothing at all serious. If you don't get this boat, you won't be in time for Ned's wedding, and he'd never forgive you. You've delayed quite long enough on that kid's account already." And then to the chauffeur: "All right, William!"

The powerful engine purred softly; away went the car. But as it swept into Piccadilly his grey head was twisted about trying in vain to catch a last glimpse of that window, and again he was moving uneasily on the cushions and looking very worried.

"I hate to leave with Elizabeth ill as she is," he remarked again.

Mr. Whittleby laughed lightly.

"That precious infant isn't made of sugar or salt. A little rise in temperature and a bit of headache and the attendant querulousness don't signify anything particular. She'll be as right as rain by to-morrow morning; and, even if she isn't, she'll have quite as good care if you are on your way to America on the last boat that will get you there in time for Ned's wedding, as if you were at home with her."

Mr. Whiteside nodded his handsome grey head.

"Of course, Bob—of course," he said quickly, but he said it as if he did not in the least believe it.

There was silence for a time, during which the streets shot past and Mr. Whiteside's face became apprehensive again. Bob Whittleby, noticing it, grinned.

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"I say," he asked, "did you fuss over any of your own like this? I'll bet you anything you like you didn't."

Mr. Whiteside looked at his son-in-law with reproachful dignity.

"There weren't any of them like her," he said firmly. "She's so different from most children—so quaint in her ideas and her mental processes."

Whittleby's grin broadened.

"Of course," was all he said.

II.

Even as the six-cylinder and ultra-expensive limousine was speeding down Park Lane, Michael O'Brien, accompanied by his daughter, Mrs. Timothy Hennessey, came out of the doorway of Number 1346 Primrose Street. Michael O'Brien's big frame was almost painfully arrayed in clothes of a very obvious newness. Also, for once, there was a stiff collar encircling his neck. He carried a bulging suit-case, and Mrs. Hennessey bore a bundle swathed in much brown paper and many, many yards of stout twine.

"We've no time to be losin', father," said Mrs. Hennessey, heading down Primrose Street to the corner where the motor-'buses stopped. "The boat l'aves at tin sharp. We'd better be gettin' on. If there should happen to be a breakdown, now, or aught like that——"

From somewhere above their heads came a series of thin sneezes and a child's croupy cough.

Michael O'Brien's wrinkled face suddenly twisted, as if with physical pain.

"I dunno about goin' at all, at all, Norah," said old Michael, suddenly stopping short, "wit' the wee felly in the bad shape he is. I'd never forgive mesilf if——"

"Now, don't be foolish," exclaimed his daughter almost sharply. "There's nothing to be worritin' yersilf about. Don't little Timmy always sneeze and bark like that, do he but get the wee fate av him wet be some av his own foolishness strammin' through the puddles? He'll be sufferin' no great har-rm be ut. L'ave him lay abed the day and drink the hot drinks I'll be givin' him, and be to-morrer he'll be out lookin' for more av thim puddles to stram through. Come on! 'Tis a quarter-past nine now!"

Michael followed her reluctantly. He looked more like a man going to his execution than one setting out on a long anticipated pleasure jaunt.

"He's sech a foine, quare little felly," said Michael. "If he should be tuk bad while I'm gone, I'd nivir be forgivin' mesilf."

"Ye'd throw up yer trip because av that bit av a cold av his, I suppose?" said Mrs. Hennessey almost crossly as she quickened her steps. "Sure, ye could be doin' a lot if he *was* sick and ye stayed at home, and threw up yer passage ye've paid for—and Tim givin' ye enough to go and come second cabin instead of in the steerage! Even if the lad is sick, he'll get jest as good care as if ye was here."

"Av coorse, av coorse," agreed old Michael, but he said it as if he did not in the least believe it.

"I don't mind yer ivver worritin' so much about anny of yer own childer."

Michael shook his grizzled head.

"He's such a different wee felly from most av 'em," said he. "He's that long-headed, and such quare ideas for such a little chap!"

"Sure! He's the sivinth wonder av the world," said his daughter, with a sidelong, sardonic grin at him. "But, heavin be praised, wit' all his great intellek he's wan rare tough little kid. So don't ye worrit yersilf no more. Go have yer foine trip like ye planned. Think how disappointed the Heaveys and the Shaughnesseys and the Finnigans out in America would be if ye didn't come after all the writin' ye've done to 'em."

They had almost reached the corner where the 'buses stop.

"Hurry! there's a 403 'bus comin',' said she.

Old Michael was peering down Primrose Street, and as he peered his face was working in very evident distress.

III.

On one of the decks of the *Slavic* is a dividing rope. Forward of the rope the second cabin passengers may disport themselves; aft of it is given over to first-class travellers.

On one side of that rope stood Michael O'Brien, taking in the hustle and bustle of approaching sailing; close by, on the other side of the rope, his elbows on the rail, stood Malcom Whiteside.

Mrs. Hennessey, having seen her father duly ensconced, had kissed him resoundingly, bidden him not worry, entrusted to him several scores of messages for several scores of people in America, and taken her departure.

Mr. Whittleby, having seen his father-in-

["IN THE MATTER OF DISTANCE" continued overleaf.]

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law aboard, had warmly pressed his hand, bidden him not worry, thrust upon him a half-dozen boxes of his favourite cigars, and taken his departure.

Sailing time was rapidly nearing; Mr. Whiteside looked longingly at the crowded wharf.

Michael O'Brien, gripping the rail tightly, also looked shoreward with troubled eyes.

A deep-toned whistle boomed out brayingly above their heads. Michael O'Brien started violently.

"I can't be going; I *can't;* that's all there is to it!" he muttered thickly. As he spoke he turned a distraught face towards Mr. Whiteside. He had no intention of doing so. The action was purely the involuntary one of a harassed mind. He simply looked about him at random. It was merest chance that he turned to Whiteside as he spoke.

"I beg your pardon?" said Mr. Whiteside politely, thinking he had been addressed, and the bray of the whistle drowning most of the words.

Michael O'Brien started. For the first time he seemed aware of his neighbour's presence. He coughed in embarrassment.

"I was talking to mesilf," said he, "but I was wonderin' whether or not I had the nerve to go ashore. I have a little grandson, the foinest little felly ye iver clapped eyes on. He's ill. I've been dramin' about this trip for years, and if I go ashore I'll have to lose my passage, and belikes I'll niver get another chance to go across. But I'd give a sovereign if I had the nerve to bolt ashore right now."

He seemed to feel that he was speaking to a sympathetic soul. Nor was he wrong. Malcom Whiteside took a long breath.

"My youngest son," he explained quietly, "is marrying an American girl. This is the last boat that will get me over in time for the wedding. I have a little granddaughter. She, too, was ill when I left the house this morning. And I'd give a great deal if *I* had the nerve to go ashore. My friend, we seem to be in the same fix. But I imagine we'd better go on. Probably we've magnified matters, anyway. No doubt both the children will be all right. Have a cigar!"

He passed over a long, alluring weed from his case. Old Michael took it, mumbled his thanks, bit off a good third of it, and held a match to the wrong end.

"All the same, I wisht I had the nerve to git off," he said.

"So do I," agreed Whiteside.

At that moment a taxi came speeding donw the wharf. Out of it tumbled a merry little group—an elderly man, a youngish woman, and two small children, boy and girl.

There was a hurried round of embraces; then the elderly man caught up his bundle of rugs and stooped to the two little upturned faces.

"Good-bye, grandfather! Good-bye! Good-bye!" they chattered shrilly.

Mr. Whiteside did not heed his cigar, which went plopping overside.

"Suppose—suppose I shouldn't never see little Tommy again," Michael almost whispered.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Whiteside.

The whistle was braying again. There was a great uproar on the wharf. Already they they were getting in the planks.

Whiteside leapt nimbly across the dividing rope and clutched Michael O'Brien by the arm.

"Come on!" he cried.

"Hurry up!" yelled Michael, panting along in his wake.

Down the last gang-plank they tumbled. Whiteside hailed a providential taxicab.

"Where do you want to go?" he barked at Michael. Michael gave him the address.

Whiteside turned to the chauffeur.

"1346 Primrose Street, first; then take me out to 1684 Park Lane. Let her out!"

IV.

A six-cylinder, ultra-expensive limousine swung into Primrose Street. It stopped at number 1346. Michael O'Brien, sitting on the doorstep, looked up. Out of the limousine was thrust a very handsome grey head. The face beneath the grey hair was a trifle sheepish.

"Well," said Malcom Whiteside, "how did you find your kid?"

Michael smiled foolishly, and licked his lips with his tongue.

"He were up the street, whalin' sin outer a kid that had sarsed him," he confessed. "And the little girl?" he inquired politely.

"She'd grown tired of being kept in bed. She'd got up and run away. They were just bringing her back when I arrived."

There was an understanding silence. They grinned at each other.

"I think we need a bit of stimulant," Whiteside remarked. "Get in!"

"I'm wid yez there, sor, though I guess it's on the two av us," said Michael O'Brien, entering the limousine.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Your joy and glee should know no bounds,
We give away a thousand pounds,
A THOUSAND POUNDS;
A THOUSAND POUNDS
A THOUSAND POUNDS
A THOUSAND POUNDS.

Let each one romp to win this comp.—
Great lordly people, stiff with pomp,
And poor, meek hounds;
We give away a thousand pounds,
A thousand pounds.

£1000 (ONE THOUSAND POUNDS).

I have always hungered to sling money broadcast, to watch golden sovereigns glitter through the air, and know that whoever picks them up will rejoice and bless my name for ever. Many is the competition we have evolved in the past purely to gratify this instinct, but as a rule the prize-money has run into mere hundreds.

To-day I have the felicity to announce the distribution of £1000 among fortunate readers of the ROYAL. You may imagine my feelings of joy—and I can imagine yours as you read these lines.

Full particulars of this colossal offer appear on page 170. The whole thing is utterly simple; you look at the pictures, write down their names, and collect the money. Could anything be more acceptable for a summer competition, a pastime for the warm summer days?

MAKING THE BEST OF LIFE.

I want to interest you for one moment in what one might call the art of living.

You may say that to live is automatic, just as breathing is automatic, to which I reply that just as correct breathing requires to be taught, so does the art of making the best of life.

Realising that a popular magazine should identify itself as far as possible with every phase of life, serious as well as frivolous, we are starting a new feature in the July number with just that title: "Making the Best of Life." It will not be a dull homily on what we ought to do, but a friendly talk on all kinds of subjects that crop up in everyone's daily round—business, sport, work, play, and even, if necessary, affairs of the heart.

EQUALITY OF THE SEXES

will be the keynote of these pages, for we hope to interest feminine readers as much as men, and enjoy the confidence of both.

The contributor whom we have persuaded to conduct this new feature has spent the last fifteen years in helping young people of both sexes to make the best of life in every way. And our sincere wish is that the personality behind its pages shall be looked upon as everybody's friend, and consulted on any important point which may arise in the life of a reader. We invite correspondence on no matter what subject, connected either with work or play.

A PRACTICAL NOTE

is sounded, above all, by this new enterprise. We are no vague visionaries; we do not want to discuss theories, but to get down to business and tackle the difficulties of life.

Will you help us by looking out for this "Making the Best of Life" next month, and telling your friends about it? And, above all, write and let us know your troubles, or joys, your plans for the future, your hopes—anything that may enable us to help you, or someone else through you.

We want to make a big thing of this new departure, and we intend to succeed. I am sure we can count on *your* assistance.

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